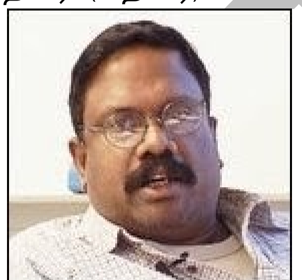


'தமிழக இராணுவயியல்'-1-DPSivaram

DPSivaram கட்டுரை 'தமிழக இராணுவயியல் ' உள்ள ஜாதி சாச்சி சிறிகாந்தா மூலம்

திரு. மதிப்பிற்குரிய நன்பர் சிவராம் கடந்த 19 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் பிரிட்டிஷ் காலனித்துவ காலத்தில் தமிழக இரானுவம் பற்றிய பல விஷயங்களில் இருந்து உண்மையான பதிவுகள் இருந்தது. அவர் [சிவராம் ஒருவேளை ... தேவர் (மறவர்) அல்லது கள்ளராக] இருக்கலாம்.



தர்மரத்தினம் சிவராம் அல்லது தராக்கி சிவராம் (ஆகஸ்ட் 11, 1959 - ஏப்ரல் 28,2005) இலங்கையின் பிரபலமான ஊடகவியலாளரும் தமிழ்நெட்டின் பிரதான எழுத்தாளரும் முன்னாள் போராளியுமாவார். கொழும்பு பம்பலப்பிட்டியில் காவல் நிலையம் முன்பாக வெள்ளை நிற கூடுந்து (வான்) ஒன்றில் வந்த ஆயுததாரிகளால் கடத்தப்பட்ட இவர் தாக்கப்பட்ட பின்னர் வாகனமொன்றில் கொண்டு வரப்பட்டு இலங்கை பாராளுமன்றத்துக்கு அருகில் சுட்டுக் கொல்லப்பட்டுள்ளார். தலையை இலக்கு வைத்தே 9 மில்லி மீட்டர் வகை கைத்துப்பாக்கியினால் இவர் சுடப்பட்டுள்ளார்.[1].

"எம் இனத்தில் தோன்றி மறைந்த எம் குல வீர வேங்கைக்கு எமது வீர வணக்கங்கள்"

"போராளிகள் இறந்த பின்பும் அமரர்களாக நம்மிடையே வாழ்கிறார்கள்"-வீர சாவர்க்கர்"

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இதில் தமிழ்நாட்டில் இருந்த மறவர் சாதியை பற்றிய ஆய்வை அவர் தமது கட்டுரையில் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளார். சிவராம் விடாமுயற்சியுடன் தமிழ்நாடு மறவர் ஜாதியின் வரலாறை படித்தார் என அவர் காட்டிய ஆதாரங்களில் இருந்து தெரிய வருகின்றது . அந்த ஆதாரங்கள் கீழே கொடுக்கபட்டுள்ளன ."தமிழ்நாட்டில் போர்குடியினர் எவர் " என்று வலியுறுத்தியுள்ளார். ஆனால் தொழில் நூட்பம் கொண்ட ஒரே போர் ஜாதியாக மறவரே தமிழ் நாட்டில் ஆங்கிலேய காலத்தில் இருந்துள்ளனர் என அவர் தனது குறிப்புகளில் கூறியுள்ளார்.

In defense of Sivaram's essay, I provide below excerpts from the writings of two British elites, namely Sir Walter Elliot and Dr. John Shortt, who have presented their observations on the Maravar caste of Tamil Nadu in 1869. During that colonial era, so-called British gentlemen [even academic elites] writing in condescending style to academic journals about the brown/black

natives living in their colonial territory was an acceptable fashion. Thus, though jarring to read some lines now, we have to ignore their arrogant tone, which sometimes even seeped into the titles of their research communications. Chieftain Veera Pandiya Katta Bhomman, now revered by Tamils as a revolutionary for his times to stand up against the British bullying, was then described as a "dumb chief" by Sir Walter Elliot. The title of Dr. John Shortt's communication was "On the Wild Tribes of Southern India."

சிவராமின் கட்டுரையில் 1869 ம் ஆண்டு கால ஆங்கில ஆவனத்தில் பிரட்டிஷ் அரசின் சர் வால்டர் எலியட் மற்றும் டாக்டர் ஏவ் அவர்களின் மறவர் ஜாதி பற்றிய அவர்களது அவதானிப்புகளின் எழுத்துக்களில் இருந்து மேற்கோள்களை கீழே கொடுக்கிறார்.இந்த பழைய ஆவனத்தில் இருந்து ஒரு விஷயத்தை சர் எலியட் குறிப்பிடுகின்றார்.ஆதாவது தமிழ்நாட்டில் புரட்சிகர சரித்திரத்தில் விளங்கிய வீரபாண்டிய கட்டபொம்மனை ஒரு பொம்மை அரசர் என சர் வால்டர் எலியட் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளனர்.[தென் இந்திய ஜாதிகளும் பழங்குடிகளும் என்ற நூலில் இருந்து].

இருப்பினும், இதில் மறைந்த அமரர் சிவராமின் வரிகள் தமிழக விடுதலை போராட்டத்தின் வீரசரித்திரத்தில் இருந்த பல உண்மைகளை வெளிகொணர்ந்துள்ளது.

சர் வால்டர் எலியட் , இருந்து (1) கேள்வி: ' மத்திய மற்றும் தென் இந்திய மக்கள் தொகை பண்புகள் ' [லண்டன் இன சமூகம் , 1869 ஜர்னல் , தொகுப்பு 1 , எண் .2 , pp.94 -128]

" ... இவர்கள் மூன்றில் ஒரு பங்கு மக்களாக பொது தொகையில் இருக்கலாம். ஆதாவது முரட்டு கூட்ட்டங்கள்.இவர்களை தென்பகுதியில் பாளையக்காரராக அழைக்கிறார்கள், இதில் மறவர்,கள்ளர்,வேடர்,ராமுசிஷ் என அழக்கிறார்கள் வட இந்தியாவில் வேறு இனத்தவர்களாக கோளிஷ் மற்றும் குஜ்ஜர் போன்ற குஜராத்தி மரபினர்களாக அறிய படுகின்றார்கள். இவர்களிடம் பல ஒற்றுமைகள் கானப்படுகின்றன வீரம்,மரபு,தோற்றம்,பராக்கிரமம்,போர்க்குனம்,கொள்ளைகுனம் இதில் பொது ஒற்றுமை காணப்படுகின்றனர். மற்றும் . அவர்கள் ஒரு வளைதடி போன்ற ஒரு வளைந்த குச்சி பயன்படுத்தி அதை எறிந்து அதை வீழ்த்தவும் பிடிக்கவும் பயன்படுத்துகின்றனர்.

இவர்கள் அனைவரும் மிக பராக்கிரமம் வல்லமை மற்றும் புத்திகூர்மை பெற்ற **இவர்களுக்கு இனையாக வட அமெரிக்க இந்தியன் மட்டுமே சமம் எனலாம்.வேறு யாரையும் இவர்களுக்கு இனையாக கூறமுடியாது**

"...There is a third well-defined race mixed with the general population, to which a common origin may probably be assigned; I mean the predatory classes. **In the South they are called Poligars, and consist of the tribes of Marawars, Kallars, Bedars, Ramusis;** and in the North are represented by the Kolis of Guzerat, and the Gujars of the North-west Provinces. All of these present the same characters, physical and moral; being brave, athletic, warlike, addicted to robbery, and fond of the chase, in which they make use of a curved stick, throwing it with great dexterity like a bomerang. They possess a skill in tracking men or beasts, equalled only by that of the North American Indian; and are unrivalled in the ingenuity with which they evade the most watchful vigilance in their plundering excursions. They exist in numerous, independent communities, situated in the less accessible parts of the country, yielding a nominal obedience to the ruling power of the time, and paying a small tribute when the Government is strong enough to enforce it. From their fastnesses they plunder the surrounding plains in time of trouble, or exact blackmail to purchase exemption from their inroads.

இவர்களுள் சில அரசுகள் கவனிக்கபடுபவை ஆதாவது மைசூர் அரசு,கார்வாதிநகர்,தொண்டைமான் புதுக்கோட்டை,இராமநாதபுரம்,சிவகங்கை அரசுகள்.இவர்களது நானயத்தில் சிவன்,பார்வதி,துர்க்கையை அச்சிட்டு பல இஸ்லாமிய மன்னர்களிடம் இருந்து தம்மை இந்து தர்மத்தில் இருந்து காத்து வந்தனர்.

With the same view every village engaged the services of one of these, who was invested with the office of village watchman, and received remuneration in land and fees, for which he not only protected the place from the visits of his friends, but tracked and seized all other depredators. Travellers, if they would proceed in safety, also engaged the services of one of these men, or failing to do so, were certainly plundered. They have never risen to sovereign power, but have established many small principalities [Foot-Note in the Original: As the Bedar Rajas of Bednore or Nagar in Mysore; of Harponhalli, etc. in the Ceded Districts; the Matta-Rachawar chief of Carvatinagar, and the Tondiman, Raja of Puducotah, a Kallar chief, in Arcot; the Marawar chiefs of Ramnad, and Sivagunga in Madura; and numerous others scattered over the whole of the south. Many of these exercised the privilege of coining money, which bore the impress of Siva and Parvati, or Durga] which have survived the rise and fall of kingdoms, both Hindu and Mohammedan.

Many tales are related of their successful plunder of military detachments, because trusting to their discipline, with extra vigilance and double sentries, they refused to hire the Kallar or Koli watchman. When the Carnatic passed from the Nawabs of Arcot to the British, an organised system of exaction was in existence, which, being incompatible with good government [Foot-Note in the Original: See, Proceedings of the Madras Government for the abolition of Men-Kaval Fees. The Men-Kavalgars were the Poligar Chiefs; the Sthala Kavalgars were the village watchmen or Taliyaris, quasi Sthaliyaris or local guardians.], was abolished, and commutations in land, money, or abatement of tribute, were given in lieu; but the services of the village watchmen were retained. This, however, was not effected without determined resistance, which led to the Poligar wars, and lasted several years. One dumb chief named Kotta Bomma Naik made a memorable defence of his fort at Panjalam Kurchi, in Tinnivelly, in 1802-3. On three several occasions his sturdy pikemen beat back the British detachments sent to reduce the place, and it was only by the despatch of a small army, including Europeans and heavy guns, that it was taken at last. [Foot-Note in the Original: A romantic incident is connected with this siege. The heart of the Bruce in its silver shrine had long been in the family of Sir Alexander Johnstone, late Chief Justice of Ceylon. Its fame had reached the Marawar chief, and, believing it to be a talisman of soverign virtue, he despatched some of his most skilful followers to steal it. It was found in the fort, and restored to its owner, but was afterwards lost in France.]

அரசு மட்டும் பலவீனமாக இருந்தால், இந்த பழங்குடியினர் தங்களது சூறையாடும் பழக்கம் தொடரும் என்று கொஞ்சம் சந்தேகம் இருக்க முடியாது. 1857 சிப்பாய் கலகத்தின் போது , நீண்ட விவசாயம் மற்றும் பிற அமைதியான தொழில்களில் ஈடுபட்டிருந்த தில்லி, அருகில் குஜார் கிராமங்களில் ஒரே நேரத்தில் தங்கள் கொந்தளிப்பான மற்றும் கொள்ளை உணர்வுகளை மீண்டும் . முற்றிலும் சீரமைக்கப்பட்ட வரை, அவர்கள் சிரமம் முறை ஆபத்து ஒரு உறுப்பு இருக்கும் தொடரும் . "

எவ் , (2) பகுதிகள்: [இன லண்டன் சங்கம், 1869 , vol.7 , pp.186 -194 பரிமாற்றங்களையும்] ' தென் இந்திய காட்டு பழங்குடியினர் மீது ' There can be little doubt that if the arm of the Government should be weakened, all these tribes would resume their predatory habits. During the mutiny of 1857, the Gujar villages near Delhi, which had been long engaged in agriculture and other peaceful occupations, at once resumed their turbulent and rapacious instincts. Unless thoroughly reformed, they will continue to be an element of danger in times of difficulty."

மறவர்கள் பற்றிய ஜான் ஷார்ட்(1869):

இவர்கள் இப்பகுதியின் மிக தொல்குடியினர்.இவர்கள் பிற்பாடு வடக்கிலிருந்து புலம் பெயர்ந்த பிராமனரின் இந்துதுவா கொள்கைக்கு ஆட்பட்டு வாழ்ந்தனர்.இவர்கள் பல காலம் கடந்து தன் பாரம்பரிய நாகரிகத்தை காப்பாற்றி வருகின்றனர்.

திருநெல்வேலி மாகானத்தில் மறவர் மிகுதியாக கானப்பட்டனர். அவர்கள் கூட்டத்தில் ஆயிரம் பேர் பாண்டிய வம்சத்தின் நேரடியான பிரதிநிதியின் வம்சாவளிகள் என அறியப்படுகின்றனர்[பாண்டியர் கி.மு 500 முதல் கி.பி.1500 வரை மதுரையை ஆண்டுள்ளனர் அதன் பின்பு திருநெல்வேலியே தலைநகராக ஆண்டனர்].

(2) Excerpts from, John Shortt: 'On the Wild Tribes of Southern India' [Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London, 1869, vol.7, pp.186-194]

"...Maravers: These are believed to be the ancient inhabitants of the plains, who became subject to Hindooism by the influx of Brahmins among them from the north; who, having emigrated from their native place, settled down on the banks of the fertile rivers, carrying with them a knowledge of civilisation, and instructing the people in the knowledge of letters and divisions and subdivisions of castes, probably some six or seven centuries prior to the Christian Era. The Maravers are believed to constitute the greatest bulk of the population of the [Tinnevelly] district, numbering over one hundred thousand, and to be descendants of lineal representatives of the Pandean dynasty, which flourished from B.C. 500 to the fifteenth century. Subsequently the capital of the Pandean kingdom was established at Madura, embracing the Madura and Tinnevelly districts. The Maravers are a robust hardy race, dark skinned (almost black), athletic, active, of medium height; muscular system fully developed; forehead rather low; cranium rounded, narrow in front; eyes large and full.

மறவர்களின் தோற்றம் மிக கரிய நிறத்துடையவராக,வன்மை மிகுந்தவராக,தைரியம்,போர்கலை மிகுந்தவராக,மத்திய உயரம்,நடுத்தர உயரம் ; முழுமையாக அபிவிருத்தி தசை அமைப்பு; நெற்றியில் மாறாக குறைந்த ; மண்டை ஓடு , வட்ட, முன் குறுகிய ; கண்கள் பெரிய மற்றும் நெற்றி சிறியதாகவும் கண்கள் பெரியதாகும் கானப்படுகின்றனர்.

They are honest and honourable to their trust in their own village; but at night form large gangs, of from fifty to one hundred, at remote places, with a view of pillaging villages. If thwarted in their designs on these occasions, they become reckless, and frequently commit murder. To avoid being taken, they divest themselves of clothing and oil their skins freely. Some notorious character having been selected for a leader, their meet takes place at some distance, and quite in a different direction, from the village intended to be plundered, so as to throw off suspicion. They carry short stout sticks, having one end loaded with two, three or more iron ferrules, in the use of which they are great experts, more especially in the manner of throwing their sticks; they often kill game at full speed in this way. They make use of all flesh meats, except beef.

அவர்கள் நேர்மையானவர்களாக மற்றும் தங்கள் சொந்த கிராமத்தின் பாதுகாவலர் என தங்களை கௌரவமாக கருதுகிறார்கள்; இரவில் கிராமங்களில் ஒரு பார்வை , தொலை இடங்களில் , மறவர்கள் குழக்களாக வாழ்ந்தனர். மறவர் கிராமங்கள் கோட்டைச் சுவர்களுடன் இருந்தன. கிராமத்தலைவர்கள்

கிராமத்தைப் பாதுகாக்க வலுவான ஒரு படை வைத்திருந்தனர். கிராமத் தலைவர்கள் முழு சுயாட்சி அதிகாரம் பெற்றவராக இருந்தாலும் தேவைப்படும் சமயங்களில் மன்னருக்கு ராணுவச்சேவை செய்தனர்.

ஒவ்வொரு மறவரும் போர் வீரராகவே இருந்தனர். அவர்களில் ஒரு சிலர் மட்டுமே நிலங்களில் பாடுபட்டனர். இந்த வீரர்கள் தங்கள் கிராமத்தில் காவலர்களாக இருந்தனர். தலைவர்களின் போர்க்காலங்களில் பங்கேற்றும் கோட்டைகளைக் காத்தும் தங்கள் தலைவருக்கு ஆதரவாகப் போரில் உதவினர்.

மறவர்கள் முதலாவதாகத் தங்களின் கிராமத் தலைவருக்கே கட்டுப்பட்டவராக இருந்தனர். அவரே அவர்களைப் பாதுகாப்பவராகவும் ஆள்பவராகவும் இருந்தார்

மறவர்கள் மாட்டிறைச்சி தவிர மற்ற சதை உணவுகளின் மீது பிரியம் உள்ளவராக இருந்துள்ளனர்.

Their hair is worn long, and put up after the fashion of the women of the Deccan. They seldom cover their heads; the few who do so simply tie a long coloured handkerchief about the head…." Thanks:
Caste in D.P.Sivaram's 'On Tamil Militarism' Essay
by Sachi Sri Kantha

'தமிழக இராணுவயியல்'-6-DPSivaram -2

On Tamil Militarism ; a 11 part essay by D.P.Sivaram written in 1992
Part 2: Tamil Military Castes

by D. P. Sivaram
[courtesy: Lanka Guardian, May 15, 1992, pp.17-19; prepared by Sachi Sri Kantha, for the electronic record]
Thus, towards the latter part of the 19th century, there were large, disgruntled groups with a military past in the Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies. They felt that the vast field of opportunities opened by the expanding Indian army was being unfairly denied to them. This grievance was further exacerbated by views of the British military leadership which relegated them to a non-martial status as races that were not fit to bear arms; in whom fighting qualities had declined.
The reaction of these groups was marked by a compulsion to emphasise the martial credentials of their cultures. Opposition to British rule which emerged among classes affected by the shift in recruitment toward the 'martial races' of North western India took shape into an ideology that asserted a national spirit which exalted military virtues and ideals as the cure for the ills of Indian society under the British yoke. Bal Gangadhar Tilak who emerged as a spokesman for the disfranchised military groups became the ideologue of this nationalist Indian militarism. Stephen Cohen has attempted to define Indian militarism in terms of Indian attitudes towards the British-Indian military structure and recruitment.
"There are two fundamentally different sets of Indian attitudes towards the British-Indian military structure, both of which may legitimately be labelled Indian militarism: modern militarism and traditional militarism…emerged in Bengal and western India and spread to other regions. Modern militarism stressed the value of the military as a national universal solvent; as an expression of the national will and demanded equalitarian recruitment. 'Traditional militarism' resulted from regional traditions and the

recruiting practices of the British. It was confined to those castes and classes which exercised the use of arms as matter of birth right and was unevenly distributed throughout India..."(14)

At the turn of the [20th] century there were two groups in the Tamil region which had a decidedly militarist and anti-British outlook. (a) the adherents of modern Indian militarism - the terrorists - and their sympathizers. (b) the disfranchised traditional military castes. The dispersion of modern Indian militarism's basic tenet - that the revival of India's 'heroic age' and its war-like traditions and valus was necessary for national emancipation - invested the heroic past and martial cultures of the disfranchized traditional Tamil military castes with a nationalist significance and cogence. Modern Tamil militarism - the political idea that military virtues and ideals 'rooted in Tamil martial traditions' is essential for national resurgence and emancipation - was enunciated at this specific conjuncture in the school of Tamil renaissance established by Pandithurai Thevar - a noble belonging to the sethupathy clan of the dominant traditional Tamil military caste - the Maravar.

Tamil militarism then, is the effect of inter-related modern and traditional components; the former as nationalist renaissance ideology, the latter as caste culture. Traditional Tamil militarism in the Tamil region as elsewhere in India was confined to a group of castes which considered "the use of arms as matter of birth and right". The Maravar were, according to the Madras Presidency census report for 1891 "a fierce and turbulent race famous for their military prowess" and were "chiefly found in Madura and Tinnevely where they occupy the tracts bordering in the coast from Cape Comorin to the northern limits of the Ramnad Zemindari."(15) The Dutch found them to be the traditional soldier caste of Jaffna and availed themselves of their caste services as such (16) - one of the earliest instances of a colonial power making use of a specific military caste in South Asia.

Cohen notes two categories of traditional Indian military castes with different grievances at the turn of the 19thcentury. (a) "members of classes which were no longer recruited or recruited in small numbers", (b) "those classes which constituted the army but sought even greater status as commissioned officers."(17)

The Maravar and their grievances, however belong to a third category. They were a people whom the British attempted to totally demilitarize by depriving them of their traditional status in Tamil society through social, economic and penal measures. This was in direct contrast to the social and economic privileging of such castes and classes in the north, during the same period. They were not only disfranchised but were turned into and classified as a delinquent mass - the subject of a disciplinary and penal discourse - relegated to the fringes of the new social pact which was being established in the Tamil South of the Madras Presidency. The obliteration of their traditions and memory was considered essential to complete the process of demilitarization and pacification of the Tamil region. The martial races theory of recruitment and the subsequent martialization of the north futher erased their martial legacy and that of the Tamil South from the military ethnography of the subcontinent.

David Washbrook argues that "the subvention and protection of the north Indian dominant caste communities, and the martialization of their culture, were but two of the many ways in which south Asia paid the price of liberal Britain's prosperity and progress."(18) On the otherhand the strategy of emasculating and destroying the hegemony of Tamil military caste communities and the demartialization of Tamil culture were two important ways in which the Tamil South paid the price of India's development as a nation.

The legacy of these strategies in the north and south of the subcontinent, embodied in the structure of the modern Indian army, is central to the emergence of modern Tamil militarism. The gains of this demartialization were consolidated by favouring and encouraging non-military castes in Tamil society which "contrasted favourably with the Maravar".(19)

The more important of these were the Vellalas, Nadars and Adi Dravidas. The culture and values of the "peace loving" (Madras census, 1871) Vellalas who had "no other calling than the cultivation of the soil" eminently suited the aims of demartialization and suppression of the traditional military castes. In this the British were following local precedents which had

been based on the principle that the best way to ensure control and security was to "have none there but cultivators" (21). Thus, under active British patronage the Vellala caste established its dominance, and its culture became representative and hegemonic in Tamil society. The Nadars and Adi Dravidas were considered amenable to conversion. A large section of them had become Anglicans. The recruitment base of the Indian army in the Madras Presidency was constituted strongly in favour of these groups. The Dravidian ideology emerged as the cultural and academic basis for their pro-British politics, led by the newly arisen Vellala elite.

The nascent Dravidian movement was clearly underpinned by the concerns of British administrators and Anglican missionaries (22) in consolidating the social, economic and religious gains of demartialization. This is why the early Dravidian school of Tamil studies and historiography had a strong political compulsion to reject, ignore or play down the dominant role of the traditional military castes in Tamil history and culture, and to assert that Tamil civilization was Vellala civilization. (Maraimalai Atikal, was the chief proponent of this view.)

Thus in the early decades of the twentieth century we find two contending narratives (23) of Tamil national identity - the ideology and caste culture of the anti-British and "turbulent" military castes and the ideology and caste culture of the pro-British and "peace loving" Vellala elite - claiming authentic readings of the Tamilian past and present. The one claiming that the "pure Tamils" were Vellalas. The other claiming that all Tamils are Maravar and that the Tamil nation was distinguished by its ancient martial heritage. How then did Tamil militarism which originally was related to a political and social milieu that was opposed to the Dravidian movement become its dominant feature in the [nineteen] fifties and sixties to the levelof strongly impacting on the Tamil nationalist movement in Sri Lanka's north and east?

It was related politically to changes that took place in the Dravidian movement and the changes that took place in Maravar - Indian National Congres relations after the [19]30's. In the Dravidian movement the change was connected mainly with, (a) the rejection of the pro-British elitist leadership of the Justice Party in 1944. (b) the radical change in the attitude towards British rule and imperialism in 1947048 which gave rise to sharp differences within the movement.

Relations between the Indian National Congress and the Maravar began to deteriorate when the moderate Brahmin leadership of the Madras Presidency Congress preferred not to oppose the harsh measures of the British against the Tamil military castes. The contradiction became sharp when Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar the powerful and influential Marava leader, joined the Indian National Army under Subash Chandra Bose and began organizing the Forward Bloc against the Congress in the Tamil region.(24) The antagonism climaxed in a violent caste conflict in 1957. The Congress government arrested Muthuramalinga Thevar in connection with the riot. The DMK which had very little influence in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu at that time made a strategic intervention at this juncture in Maravar affairs. M.Karunanidhi, the only DMK candidate to be elected in the southern parts at that time, was chiefly responsible for co-opting the Maravar into the DMK; and for making the culture of the Tamil military castes a dominant and essential component of Tamilian national identity.

For many years, until he became chief minister, Karunanidhi wrote under the pen-name Maravan. His weekly letter to party cadres was known as Maravan Madal (25) - the Maravan's epistle. Tamil militarism thus became integral to the Dravidian movement. The secessionist militancy of the DMK in the [nineteen] fifties and early [nineteen] sixties wad dominated by the vocabulary of Tamil militarism. This was the nadir of the Dravidian movement's impact on Sri Lankan Tamils. DMK branches were organized in many parts of the north, east and the hill country. It was during this period that ayoung student named Kathamuthu Sivanandan from Amirthakazhi, a small village near the Batticaloa town who was studying in Tamil Nadu took part in the militant agitations of the DMK. Karunanidhi described him as "the appropriate weapon for Tamil upheaval."(26). The student who was later known as Kasi Anandan wrote for a fortnightly called Dhee Mu Ka (DMK) (27) when he came back to Sri Lanka. In it appeared his poem, 'The Maravar clan'-Maravar kulam (28):

"The Tamil army is a Maravar Army…

the enraged Tamils are a Tiger Army (Pulippadai)..."

These lines of the poem are now part of the history and myths of the Tamil Tigers' genesis.

Foot Notes

(14) Stephen P.Cohen: op.cit, p.58.

(15) Edgard Thurstan, K.Rangachari: Castes and Tribes of South India, vol.V, 1909, Govt.Press, Madras, pp.22-23.

(16) The Maravar's connections with Jaffna will be examined elsewhere in this study, especially in view of a recent attempt by a Jaffna historian to show that the early colonists of Jaffna were Maravar and that the rulers of Jaffna belonged to the Sethupathy clan of that caste. He has claimed that Vadamaradchi was in former days Vada Maravar Adchi [the domain of north Maravar]; 'Yazh Kudi-etram', K.Muthu Kumaraswamippillai, 1982, Chunnakam, Jaffna.

(17) S.P. Cohen: op.cit, p.59.

(18) David Washbrook: op.cit, p.481.

(19) A phrase used by the British to describe castes which were found suitable for the new order.

(20) Edgard Thurston: op.cit, pp.369-370, VII.

(21) The Portuguese had applie this principle to establish their control in Jaffna. Tikiri Abeyasinghe: Jaffna under the Portuguese, 1986, Colombo, p.24.

(22) The father of the Dravidian ideology, Robert Caldwell was Bishop of Tinnevely, the seat of Marava power.

(23) For the idea of 'contending narratives' in the formation of national identity in another Indian context, the Ayodhya crisis, see Barbara Stoller Miller: Presidential Address, Journal of Asian Studies, vol.50, no.4, Nov.1991.

(24) The Forward Bloc was found by Subash [Chandra Bose]. I am grateful to Subash Chandra Bose Thevar, the chief subeditor of the 'Virakesari', a Maravar himself, for drawing my attention to this phase of Maravar history and for the valuable comments and material on the subject, when I began this study in 1990.

(25) This was also the name a main DMK party paper, in the [19]60s.

(26) 'Uyir Thamizhukku', Kasi Anandan, Fatima Press, Batticaloa; Preface, p.2, 3rd edition, [publication] year not given.

(27) Two other papers called 'DMK' were published in Sri Lanka during this period.

(28) DMK (fortnightly), 10.7 [i.e., July].1962, Colombo, editor and publisher Vasantha Appathurai.

Note: I am greatly indebted to Prof.K.Sivathamby for his valuable comments on Tamil history and culture and for drawing my attention two years ago to the role of the southern districts of Tamil Nadu in Tamil renaissance.

On Tamil Militarism: Introduction

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தமிழக இராணுவயியல்'-10-DPSivaram- 3

On Tamil Militarism ; a 11 part essay by D. P. Sivaram written in 1992

Part 3: Tamil Militarism - The Code of Suicide

by D. P. Sivaram

[courtesy: Lanka Guardian, June 1, 1992, pp.13-15 and 24; prepared by Sachi Sri Kantha, for the electronic record]

"You are to know that in this land of Malabar, there is another caste of people called the Nayres who have no other duty than to serve in war, and they always carry their arms wither so ever they go...they all live with the King and the other great

lords; nevertheless all receive stipends from the King or from the great lords with whom they dwell. None may become a Nayre save he who is of Nayre lineage. They will not touch anyone of low caste…The most part of these Nayres when they are seven years of age are sent to schools where they are taught many tricks of nimbleness and dexterity…and when they are fully accomplished in this way they teach them to play with weapons to which they are most inclined. All Nayres are mighty warriors."(1)

observes Duarte Barbosa in his account of the Zamorin's domain (a division of the old Chera kingdom) - one of the earliest records made by the Portuguese within a few years of their entry into the Indian Ocean. The feudal military system described by Barbosa was common to those parts of South India known to the Portuguese as Malabar. In its southern and south eastern parts the military castes were known as Maravar, Kallar and Ahampadiyar; of these the Kallar and Maravar had kingship traditions. This feudal military system was found in Jaffna as well when the Portuguese arrived. The Palk Strait was known to them as the Marava Bay.

The Tamil country was divided into a number of feudal domains, called Palayams, which literally means 'military camps' (2), the chief of which was the Palayakarar - the commander of the camp. Most of the Tamil Palayakarar were Maravar. Each maintained a body of Kallar, Maravar and Ahampadiyar warriors who "served on the battle field and in times of peace engaged in hunting and training in the military arts, nourishing a rugged and practical character", and serving as village guards (kaval) for a contribution (3). In Jaffna "the Maravar had to learn the art of war from the age of sixteen till they were twenty four years of age; then they had to become village kaval-karar, live on land given by the King and return to military service whenever the king required them to do so."(4)

The military system of the Tamil country was yet a dream in eighteenth century Europe; its armies were in the process of developing methods and regulations which "got rid of the peasant" in the new recruit and "gave him the air of a soldier." J.Servan, an 18th century French military theoretician wrote a treatise on the 'soldier citizen' (1780). He "dreamt of a military machine that would cover the whole territory of the nation and in which each individual would be occupied without interruption, but in a different way according to the evolutive segment, the genetic sequence in which he finds himself. Military life would begin in childhood, when young children would be taught the profession of arms in military manors; it would end in these same manors when the veterans right up to their last day would teach the children, exercise the recruits, preside over the soldier's exercises…and finally make order resign in the country, when troops were fighting at the frontiers."(9)

The ideal Palayam was Servan's military machine; the Kallar, Maravar, Ahampadiyar and Nayar were its 'oldest citizen'. The Palayam was sustained by a codified martial culture. As we shall see later the practice of martial suicide was most prevalent in the Kongu region of Tamil Nadu, which had a very large number of Palayams.

Early Europeans who studied the military system of the Tamil country were inclined to read therein, some of the ideals embodied in the celebrated regulations of the Prussian infantry that the whole of Europe imitated after the victories of Frederick II. The 18th century British military historian Robert Orme's description of the military castes of the Tamil country is typical. He says,

"They are tall, well made and well featured. Their arms are lances and pikes, bows and arrows, rockets and matchlocks, but whether with or without other weapons every man constantly wears a sword and shield. In battle the different arms move in distinct bodies, but the lancemen are rated the most eminent, and lead all attacks. This weapon is eighteen feet long. They tie under the point a tuft of scarlet horse hair, and when they attack horse, add a small bell. Without previous exercise, they assemble in a deep column, pressing close together and advance at a long steady step, in some degree of time, their lances inclining forward but aloft, of which the elasticity and vibration, with the jingle and dazzle scare, the cavalry; and their approach is scarcely less formidable to infantry not disciplined with firearms."(6)

The boomerang - or Valai Thadi in Tamil - was another weapon that "played a considerable part in the Poligar (Palayakarar) ars". The Kallan and Maravan warriors plied it with deadly effect and "could at one stroke dispatch small game and even man."(7). Like the Japanese Bakuhan system, the Palayam system was based on a feudal class structure of warriors, farmers, artisans and merchants where the distinctions between the caste statuses of the constitutent classes were strictly enforced. To symbolize this society, the Tamil warriors, like the Japanese samurai, wore swords in everyday life because the system was maintained by their military power.

Mr. Lushington who was sent as Collector to Palayakarar (Poligar) country in 1799, desirous of wresting control of the vast revenues of the land, described the Palayam (Pollam) system of Tamil feudal militarism as extremely evil. "When this contribution (Kaval dues) is not quietly submitted to, torture and the whip are applied, the whole people of the village put into confinement, every occupation interdicted, the cattle pounded, the inhabitants taken captive to, and not unfrequently murdered in, the Pollams...and such is the dread which they have inspired into the cultivators of the circar lands by remaining armed in the midst of a country otherwise in profound peace, that these requisitions are never resisted."(7)

A fierce and ancient martial culture and religion was nurtured by the military castes. As in the other martial regions of India, traditional militarism permeated several levels of society. Therefore, despite the great temple centres, the heroes and godlings of Tamil martial culture were worshipped widely throughout rural Tamilnadu. In Japan, the Samurai nurtured the values of kyuba-no-michi (the way of the bow and horse). In the Tamil country, Maram was the martial ethos of the warrior castes.

There are three characteristics of Tamil feudal militarism which set it apart from other pre-modern military cultures. They are,

(a) the detailed codification of the modes of war, the warriors' martial life and rituals etc.; known as Purath thinai.

(b) the rejection of divine participation and perfidy sanctioned by religion in the conduct of war. The great medieval Tamil commentator Naccinarkiniyar says that norms which sanction "killing through perfidy and by virtue of divine powers given by gods" are to be disregarded and that modes of war involving gods are to be rejected and refuted as modes not belonging to the Tamil speaking good world."(8)

(c) the classification of war with flowers; and a practice of wearing a particular flower when engaging in the mode of war, denoted by that flower. The author of Ramayana had noted that, "the southerners wore flowers for war."

Codified Tamil feudal militarism was nurtured and transmitted as the Purath thinai division of high Tamil Senthamizh poetics and grammar. Tolkappiyam, the earliest Tamil grammar, the Buddhist grammatical treatise Veerasoliyam, the saivite Ilakkana Villakam (17th century) and Swaminatham, written in early part of the last [i.e., 19th] century are works which contain treatises in which Tamil martial culture is codified and annotated. The perfecton and codification of Tamil martial culture through the ages was paralelled by the thematization of several narratives of military gloty in Tamil culture through epics, inscriptions, minor forms of poetry etc.

An observation is made in the British Indian army's recruitment handbook on the Sikhs that, "all sikh traditions whether national or religious are martial; in times of political excitement the martial spirit reasserts itself."(9) The culture and class interests of Japanese feudal militarism which survived the Meiji restoration partly impelled and characterized Japan's militarist nationalism and its growth as a modern military power. Similarly it can be said that the culture and structures of codified 'high Tamil' and folk forms of Tamil feudal militarism partly impelled and characterized Tamil nationalism when it became militant. Therefore two aspects of Tamil feudal militarism which has been reasserted in Tamil revivalism and militarism will be briefly examined here. They are,

(a) narratives of Tamil military might, thematized in Tamil culture. The most important of these can be reduced to the basic form - Tamil King defeats the Aryans of north India and causes his emblem to be carved on the Himalayas. The Pandyan king Neduncheliyan bore the title 'He who overran the Aryan army'. All three Tamil dynasties - Chera, Chola and Pandya -

are distinguished by this feat in a wide range of texts and inscriptions. These narratives, like the kamikaze - divine wind - legend of Japan's war with Mongols, have played an important role in the growth of Tamil nationalism.

(b) Codified practices of Tamil martial life.

1. Moothinmullai: the duty of the warrior mother to inculcate the martial ethos and to urge her sons to attain martyrdom in heroic battle. The concept of the warrior mother's duty was central to the genesis of Tamil militarism and later in militant Tamil nationalism. It is a salient theme in LTTE's current literature as well.

2. Avippali, Thannai, Verttal, Vallan pakkam, Pun Kilithu Mudiyum Maram and Marakkanchi: the forms of martial suicide and suicidal battle of the warrior as the ultimate expression of his loyalty to his commander. These six forms of martial suicide are defined as described by the works referred to above.

Pulla Vazhkai Vallan Pakkam - the martial attitude of the warrior who goes forth into suicidal battle is mentioned by Tholkappiyam. The other works refer to it as Thannai Verttal. Duarte Barbosa describes the practice among the Nayar (of the Chera kingdom). It was later noticed by British officials as well. It was also prevalent among the Maravar (of the Pandya kingdom) from whom the suicidal Aapathuthavi bodyguard was selected. Thannai Verttal also refers to the suicide of a warrior on hearing that his king or commander has died (Purapporul Venpa Malai). Punkilithu Mudiym Maramis the martial act of a warrior who commits suicide by tearing apart his battle wound.

Another form of martial suicide mentioned by all the works except Veera soliyam, is Avippali. Tamil inscriptions speak of it as Navakandam. Inscriptions found in many parts of Tamilnadu provide greater information on the practice. Navakandam is the act of a warrior who slices his own neck to fulfil the vow made to korravai - the Tamil goddess of war - for his commanders' victory in battle. The Kalingathu Parani(10) - a work which celebrates the victory of the Chola king Kulotunga and his general Thondaman in the battle for Kalinga, describes the practice in detail. "The temple of korravai is decorated with lotus flowers which bloomed when the warriors sliced their own necks"(106); "they slice the base of their necks; the severed heads are given to the goddess"(111); "when the neck is sliced and the head is severed, the headless body jumps with joy for having fulfilled the vow"(113).

The epics of Chilapadikaram (5: 79-86) and Manimekalai (6: 50-51) mention the practice. To ensure the complete severing of the head, the warrior tied his hair to a bamboo bent taut before he cut his neck. Hero stones depicting this practice are found all over Tamil Nadu, and are called Saavan Kallu by locals. The warriors who thus committed suicide were not only deified in hero stones (saavan kallu) and worshipped but their relatives were given lands which were exempted from tax(11). An area handbook (Tharamangalam) of the Tamilnadu archeology department notes that "the Nava Kandam sculpture which is found widely all over Kongu Nadu (Coimbatore, Salem) is to be seen at the Tharamangalam Kailasanathar kovil also. The people call it Saavan Kallu. "The practice of Nava Kandam existed in Kongu Nadu till the early part of this [i.e., 20th] century."(12)

A Saavan Kallu at Thenkarai Moolanatha sami Kovil in Madurai, depicting the act of a warrior holding his hair with his left hand and slicing his neck with his right - 14th century - is said to be annually worshipped by the Conjeevaram Mudaliyars.(13) The Conjeevaram Mudaliyars are Kaikolar, a weaving caste which was militarized under the Chola empire and was made into a special military body; there are indications that Kaikolar warriors practiced Nava Kandam(14). The founder of the DMK, C.N.Annadurai was a Conjeevaram mudaliyar, of the kaikolar caste.

Apart from these codified forms of martial suicide, a method called Vadakkiruththal is mentioned in Tamil heroic poetry. It is the act of a warrior king fasting to death, if some dire dishonour were to come upon him(15). The Tamil teacher, and the Dravidian propagandist, turned the song of the legendary Chera king Irumborai who committed suicide when he was taken captive by his enemies into a compelling theme in Tamil renaissance.

The Avippali form of martial suicide as the ultimate expression of loyalty to one's commander, is deeply embedded in the Tamil psyche. Senchorru-kadan (the debt of red rice) is a phrase that is widely used today by Tamils as an expression of loyalty. One frequently hears of it in a popular Tamil song. The phrase sands for the ritual of partaking of rice by which Maravar and other Tamil military caste warriors bound themselves to their king or commander to die in suicidal battle for him, or to commit suicide on the day he was slain. Of Avippali, the Puraporul Venba Malai ([verse] 92) says, "thinking of nothing but the red (blood) rice the Maravar give their life as offering in battle."

The ritual of red or blood rice was described by two Muslim travellers who had visited the Tamil country in the 9th century. "A quantity of cooked rice was spread before the king, and some three or four hundred persons came of their own accord and received each a small quantity of rice from the king's own hands,after he himself had eaten some. By eating of this rice, they all engage themselves to burn themselves on the day the king dies or is slain; and they punctually fulfill their promise."(16) In modern times it has been observed that "when a Maravar takes food in the house of a stranger, he will take a pinch of earth and put it on the food before he commences his meal."(17) This act freed him from the debt of blood rice.

Foot Notes

(1) The Book of Duarte Barbosa, 1518; first published 1812 English translation by Mansel Longworth Dames, 1921 Hakluyt Society, 1866; reproduced by Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1989, vol.II, pp.38-40.

(2) R.P.Sethupillai, 1946: Thamilaham- Oorum Perum, Palaniyappa Bros, Madras, p.76.

(3) Robert Caldwell, 1881: History of Tinnevely, reproduced by Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1989, p.104.

(4) A. Mootootamby Pillai, 1912: Jaffna History, Navalar Press, Jaffna, p.104.

(5) Michel Foucault, 1991: Discipline and Punish, Penguin Books, translation Alan Sheridan, pp.135, 165.

(6) Quoted in R.Caldwell, op.cit. p.103.

(7) Thurston, op.cit. vol.III, p.71.

(8) Tholkappiyam Porulathikaram, Naccinarkiniyar's commentary on verse No.68 & 90.

(9) Maj.A.E.Barstow, 1928: Sikhs, Handbook for the Indian Army, Calcutta Central Publications Branch, p.40.

(10) Parani - "A poem about a hero who destroyed 1000 elephants in war", Tamil Lexicon, vol.IV.

(11) South Indian Inscriptions, 1943: Madras, vol.XII, no.106.

(12) R.Poonkunran, 1979: Tharamangalam, publication No.58. Tamilnadu Dept.of Archaeology, no pagination. "Kongunadu was well known for its palayams", R.P.Sethupillai, op.cit, p.76.

(13) M.Chandramoorthy: 'Kalvettu' Quarterly of the Tamilnadu Dept.of Archaeology, no.8, January 1975, pp.21-22.

(14) South Indian Inscriptions 1967; vol.XIX, no.3.

(15) Purananooru; [verse] 212-223. Kopperun-Cholan who thus committed suicide was apotheosized. K.P.Aravanan examines this practice in relation to the 'Sallehana' form of fasting unto death among Jain saints: The Other side of Tamils, 1989; Paari Nilayam, Madras. Cheraman Peruncheralathan committed suicide thus when he accidentally received a wound on his back in battle which was considered a great dishonour to a warrior (Purananooru: [verse] 65).

(16) Thurston, op.cit., vol.V, p.287.

(17) Thurston, op.cit., vol.V, p.32.

Note: Swaminatham was first published in full in 1975, by S.V.Shanmugam, Annamalai University, based on a manuscript found in the British Museum library. It refers to Avippali as Poar Avikkoduthal, verse 141, p.233.

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'தமிழக இராணுவயியல்'-5-DPSivaram - 4

On Tamil Militarism ; a 11 part essay by D.P.Sivaram written in 1992

Part 4: Militarism and Caste in Jaffna

by D.P. Sivaram

[courtesy: Lanka Guardian, July 1, 1992, pp.9-10 and 14; prepared by Sachi Sri Kantha, for the electronic record]

Tamil secessionism and Tamil militarism are two sides of the same coin. Both are legacies of the attempt by the British to demilitarize Tamil society in the 19th century. Tamil militarism arose from the grievances of the disfranchised Tamil military castes. Tamil secession was the result of the political ambitions of the classes which were promoted by the British to consolidate the gains of demartialization. Therefore it is necessary to understand the colonial strategies which were aimed at depriving the traditional power and status of the Tamil martial castes in Tamil society.

In those regions of India where military service was confined to specific castes, other castes had no desire to abandon their traditional occupations for soldiering or for violence. Since the ability for violence was caste bound, disfranchising or removing a region's military caste could negate its potential for violence and rebellion. The earliest attempt to thus demilitarize Tamil society was made by the Portuguese in Jaffna. A brief examination of their effort and its impact on the subsequent evolution of society in Jaffna will help understand better the social and political consequences of demilitarization in Tamilnadu two centuries later under British rule.

The Maravar were the traditional soldier caste of Jaffna when the Portuguese arrived. Once they took control, they set about dismantling the feudal military system of the peninsula. Military titles such as Rayer, Athirayer were banned. The traditional soldier castes were seen as a threat to Portuguese control. In 1627 Lancarote de Seixas, Captain Major of Jaffna, put forward the idea that the peninsula's security lay in having none there, but cultivators. Thus began the rise of the Vellalas in Jaffna. The Portuguese seem to have also favoured another caste called the Madapalli. The Vellalas were not only cultivators, but a section of them which had developed scribal skills, provided the local officials, interpreters and karnams (accountants). Successive colonial powers found Vellala scribal groups useful where Brahmins were not forthcoming. Histories of Jaffna were written and presented to the Portuguese, which showed the Vellala and the Madapalli as the original and dominant community of the peninsula.

The Kailaya Malai and the Vaiya Padal, the earliest works on the colonization of Jaffna, appear to be such histories. They name the chieftains of Tamilnadu who had brought Tamil colonists to the peninsula with them. All of them are described as Vellalas. But eleven of them have Kallar and Maravar caste titles. The Jaffna Maravar were able to resume their caste occupation under the Dutch, who met troop shortages through Jaffna's feudal military system which the Portuguese had attempted to dismantle. The Dutch governor and director of Ceylon, Thomas van Rhee informed his successor Gerrit de Heere in 1697, that in the Jaffna peninsula "the Marruas are bound to serve the Company as Lascoryns (native soldiers) and pay t[w]o Fanams a year without anything more". But 93 years later, a Dutch census (1790) of all males between the ages 16-70 in Jaffna recorded that there were only 49 Maravar males in the peninsula, as against 1,570 Vellala males. This was due to a widespread process in Tamil society where military castes, finding their traditional status gone, simply adopted the Vellala caste title and returned themselves as peaceful Vellala cultivator, to the colonial census; and in time became endogamous subdivisions of that caste.

In 1834, Simon Casie Chitty recorded in his Ceylon Gazetteer, that Kallar, Maravar, Ahampadiyar and Palli (Vanniyar) were sub-divisions of the Vellala caste. It is clear that the Tamil martial castes of Jaffna had swelled the ranks of the Vellalas

when faced with unfavourable conditions under colonial rule, as they later did under the British in Tamilnadu. This gave rise to the saying in the peninsula, "Kallar, Maravar and Ahampadiyar came slowly, slowly and became Vellalas." But, unlike their counterparts in Tamilnad, the Jaffna Vellalas didn't generally change their military caste titles. "In former days the Vellalas had the titles of Rayan, Thevan, Kizhan and Mazhavan."

Today, one of these military caste subdivisions of the Jaffna Vellala community, bearing the Kallar caste title Mazhavarayar is a dominant land owning clan in the peninsula. The Mazhavarayar clan is also connected with the history of Thambiluvil in the Eastern province. The Mattakkalappu Manmiyam, a work which deals with the colonization of Batticaloa, mentions the mazhavar frequently among the groups which peopled the Eastern province. Although the 'vellalization' of Jaffna's Tamil military castes predates the same process in south India, Vellala cultural hegemony was achieved in the peninsula only during the early decades of the twentieth century. The persistence of endogamous subdivision identities was one reason for this.

The Vellalization of culture and religion in the peninsula began with Arumuga Navalar's attempt to convert the Jaffnese from their folk religion which was dominated by the heroes and godlings of the Tamil martial castes. The martial caste elements also figures in narratives related to the founding of Valvettithurai and Myliddy - Karaiyar caste villages on the Jaffna coast, which are key. Whereas the Sri Lankan karava (Karaiyar) caste in general has claimed kshatriya status - that they are descended from the Kuru dynasty - a strong narrative is found among the Karaiyar of Myliddy which states that three Marava chieftains who were brothers came with their caste-men from Tamilnadu, married among the karaiyar and founded the village. Its dominant clan, known as Thuraiyar - the others are known as Panivar - was connected by marriage to Ramnad, the home country of the Maravar, until recent times.

The martial arts of Maravar were popular among the Thuraiyar of Myliddy, before their youth were introduced to modern methods of military training in the last decade [i.e., 1980s]. A narrative related to the founding of Valvettithurai, based on folk etymology states that the village arose on land given to a Marava chieftain, called Valliathevan, by the eponymous founder of the Tamil kingdom of Jaffna. But a strong tradition was prevalent among the Karaiyar of Valvettithurai that they had fought the Portuguese as the soldiers of the last king of Jaffna, Sankili. This tradition, as we shall see later, was greatly exploited by TULF propagandists to mobilise people in that part of Jaffna. The tradition seems to be related to the trade wars between the early colonial powers and the Maravar kings of Ramnad.

The Portuguese, Dutch and the British tried to wrest control of the profitable rice and chank trade between Burma, Bengal and Ceylon which was in the hands of the Thevars (title of the Ramnad kings) and their Muslim and Tamil tradesmen, on either side of the Palk Strait, among whom were many Karaiyar schooner proprietors of Valvettithurai, Point Pedro and Thondamanaru. The British found that one Vaithianathan of Jaffna was among the few confidantes of the Thevar, who were looking after his chank trade in Calcutta. Karaiyar families carried on with the rice and chank trade in collaboration with Muslims, Chetties and military caste families on the south Indian coast from Ramnad to Tanjore, even after the British finally wrested control of it from the Maravar kings of Ramnad.

A large number of Thandayals (traditional navigators - captains of ocean going craft) from Valvettithurai, Point Pedro were employed in the Thevar's domain of sea trade. This became the basis of a vast 'smuggling network' between south India, Sri Lanka and southeast Asia, after independence in1948. The powerful Vandayar family (Maravar) of Tanjore maintained very close relations with a leading business house of Valvettithurai until 1983. Sometimes such connections between the coastal military castes of south Tamilnadu and the Karaiyar of Jaffna were cemented through marriage. Although Jaffna Tamil society was the earliest to have been de-martialized, and was the only part of the south Indian Tamil region where traditional Tamil military castes were completely subsumed by Vellala identity, it has become the ground in which the most fierce manifestation of Tamil militarism has taken root in modern times. How was this possible? Three reasons can be identified.

(A) The pro-colonial politics of the Jaffna Vellala was not formulated as an attitude against traditional militarisms because the Tamil military castes having assumed the Vellala identity early, were not present as a social threat in the peninsula to the consolidation of colonial authority, after the Portuguese period. Furthermore, the nature of the Vellala caste composition in Jaffna was in itself not amenable to the scribal-agrarian conservatism of the pure Vellala elites, which the British found useful in Tamilnadu. The pseudo-Vellala component of Jaffna was large. A fundamental distinction between the Vellala elite of Tamilnad and Jaffna would illustrate the point.

Arumuga Navalar campaigned against the activities of Christian missionaries and his efforts received support from Ponnuchami Thevar, the chief Marava noble of Ramnad. In former days, the Maravar had opposed the spread of Christianity, by massacaring missionaries. On the other hand, in Tamilnad, an ideologue of Vellala elitism – J.M.Nallasami Pillai, who like Navalar worked for the propagation of saiva siddhanthism among the Tamils, was closely associated with and supported by Anglican missionaries in his efforts.

As we shall see later, while Nallasami Pillai carefully and deliberately played down the martial component of Tamil culture and history, attempting to establish that Tamil civilization was constituted by the peace-loving Vellalas, his counterpart in Jaffna, Mootootambi Pillai lamented the decline of the peninsula's martial heritage. He wrote in 1912,

"When Sankili – the last king of Jaffna – fought the Portuguese, most of his soldiers were warriors of Jaffna. Even the Portuguese have praised their valour. The victory of the Portuguese was not gained through their bravery, but through Kaakai Vanniyan's treachery. Wasn't it the warrior of Jaffna who conquered the whole of Ceylon? The people (of Jaffna) who are descended of those warriors have lost their martial traits and become a despicable race, having been subjugated long under the Portuguese and the Dutch and as a result having become weak and losing their self-identity."

Mootootambi Pillai was reflecting a sentiment that had been expressed in the Madurai Tamil Sangam – established by the Marava noble, Pandithurai Thevar (the son of the noble who had earlier helped Navalar) that the decline of the Tamil nation was caused by the deterioration of its ancient and unique martial heritage.

(B) The closure of the avenues by which Vellala upward mobility and conservatism under successive Sinhala governments in Sri Lanka. The colonial powers opened these avenues to promote the class and culture of Vellala conservatism as a bulwark and gurantee against the turbulence of Tamil feudal militarism. The restrictions placed on university admissions and on government jobs seriously undermined the class and culture of Vellala conservatism and its politics of non-violence and compromise. The other narrative that was contending at this juncture, for Tamilian identity – Tamil militarism – began to assert itself as the bulwark built by colonial powers against it crumbled.

(C) Non-Vellala pockets in the peninsula where the values of Vellala conservatism had made little impact.

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தமிழக இராணுவயியல்'-9-DPSivaram - 5

On Tamil Militarism ; an 11 part essay by D. P. Sivaram written in 1992

Part 5: The suppression of Tamil military castes

by D.P. Sivaram

[courtesy: Lanka Guardian, July 15, 1992, pp.15-16; prepared by Sachi Sri Kantha, for the electronic record]

One of the first concerns of the British as soon as they conquered the southern parts of India was with the ancient and ingrained "habits of predatory war" among the Tamils. The extirpation of these "habits" and culture was considered essential to establishing their authority in Tamil society. The Tamil region was ceded to the British in July 1801; a proclamation was issued by them in December the same year, whereby the use of arms was suppressed and the military service traditionally rendered by the Tamil military castes was abolished.

It was stated in the proclamation that "wherefore the Right Honourable Edward Lord Clive…with the view of preventing the occurrence of the fatal evils which have attended the possession of arms by the Poligars and Servaikaras of the southern provinces…formally announces to the Poligars, Servaikaras and inhabitants of the southern provinces, the positive determination of His Lordship to suppress the use and exercise of all weapons of offence" and that the Palayams would be turned into Zamindari estates for the purpose of preventing the Tamil military castes from engaging in their customary military services. The British proclamation abolished the Palayam system "In the confident expectation of redeeming the people of the southern provinces from the habits of predatory warfare", and in the hope of inducing them to take up "the arts of peace and agriculture".

The ban carrying weapons was crucial to the urgent task of depriving the Tamil military castes of their traditional status in the southern provinces. The woods and fortresses of the turbulent Poligars were destroyed and removed from all maps and official documents (They remained so, until the time of Karunanidhi). Lushington, one of the first British officials to be sent to the Tamil region, had noted that the military castes by remaining armed amidst an un-warlike population wholly devoted to agriculture stood between the East India Company's coffers and the vast revenues of the land (Caldwell: 1888, chapter 9). The demilitarization of the Tamil region did not spare even the Kallar caste which had rendered valuable service to the British in the important wars of the Carnatic,by which they subjugated the whole of south India.

The hereditary chiefs of this military caste were the kings of Pudukottai - the Thondamans, who had sided with the British against Hyder Ali and later his son, Tippu Sultan. In many of the early wars, the British fought on behalf of the Nawab of Arcot in south India, the Kallar had made up a sizeable portion of their forces. But the Kallar and the other Tamil military castes had to be disfranchised to rid Tamil society of its ancient habits and culture of predatory warfare.

What did the British mean by the Tamil habit of predatory war? The Tamil works which contain treatises on martial life and the conduct of war define it as Thannuru tholil (a task undertaken on one's own) and Mannuru tholil (a task undertaken on behalf of the king or commander) - Tholkappiyam, Purathinaiyiyal, [no.]60. Unlike many other martial castes of the subcontinent, the Kallar and the Maravar were not yeoman peasants who dropped the plough for the sword only in times of war. They had to seek battles even when their king or chieftain was not at war. Most of the hero-stones found in Tamilnadu commemorate such battles between groups of Kallar or Maravar.

Some of the warrior gods who are worshipped to this day in southern Tamil Nadu are Maravar, who distinguished themselves in such battles which took place even after the British began to abolish the culture of predatory war. The bow-song of Eena Muthu Pandian, a Tamil demigod, describes the martial life and heroic deeds of that Maravar warrior who lived in British times. The warrior's virtue was to desire the bliss of the hero's heaven; it was degrading for him to seek fertile lands. The Purananooru (an anthology of Tamil heroic poems) derides the newly arisen kings for their interest in rice yielding fields (verse 287). War was the sole occupation and aim of the Tamil warrior clans. A mother describes the Tamil martial ethos - 'To bring forth and rear a son is my duty; To make him a warrior is the father's duty'. To make spears for him, is the blacksmith's; to bear bright sword and do battle, to butcher enemy's elephants and return, that is the young man's duty" (verse 312).

In many seventeenth and eighteenth century British reports the epithet "fierce and turbulent" is very often used to describe the Tamil military classes. Their ancient and deep-rooted cultural hegemony in Tamil society was seen as a positive threat to the

perpetuation of colonial rule. To eradicate it, the British adopted a dual strategy. On the one hand they attempted to destroy the social structures which sustained this culture; on the other, they promoted castes which stood to gain from the suppression of the military castes. The most important structure which gave the Kallar and Maravar immense power in the Tamil country-side was the system of kaval. It was abolished in 1832. This has been the traditional means by which the Kallar, Maravar and Ahampadiyar derived their livelihood in times of peace when they were not employed as soldiers.

The manual of the Tinnevely district, described the origins of the Maravar kavalkarars thus: "As feudal chiefs and heads of a numerous class of the population, and one whose characteristics were eminently adapted for the followers of a turbulent chieftain, bold active, enterprising, cunning and capricious, this class constituted themselves or were constituted by the peaceful cultivators, their protectors in times of bloodshed and rapine, when no central authority existed. Hence arose the system of desha and stalum kaval, or the guard of separate villages. The feudal chieftain (and his Kallar and Maravar) received a contribution from the area around his fort in consideration of protection afforded against armed invastion."

The village and district kaval system permeated many levels of rural Tamil society and hence was hinderance to the effective implementation of new form of administration and revenue collection. In some instances kaval was taken over from the military castes and was handed over to the Shanar (Caldwell; 1888, p.224) or anti-Kaval movements were encouraged among non-military castes to coerce them to give up kaval, sell their lands and leave (Madras Presidency Police Administration, 1896). Many efforts were taken to put a stop to the kaval services of the Tamil military castes in the countryside in the first half of th nineteenth century, culminating in the organization of a new police system in 1860, which recruited mostly from among castes which were considered favourable to the British.

The Adi-Dravidas or Parayar were recruited heavily into the Indian Army. The Nadu-Ambalakarar institution of the Kallar by which justice was traditionally dispensed in regions dominated by them was also abolished to make way for the penal and judiciary system introduced by the British. Deprived of their traditional occupations of kaval and soldiering and in some instances of their lands, a large section of the Tamil military castes became, in the eyes of the colonial government, a delinquent mass, a danger to the rural social order. A body of administrative and ethnographic literature arose on this perception and on the need to portray and classify the Tamil martial castes as criminal. It also relegated them to the margins of Tamil history and culture. The Kallar and Maravar who had been referred to as the military tribes of the southern provinces by early British writers were classified as criminal tribes towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The task of disfranchising the Tamil military castes and destroying the structures of their traditional power in Tamil society was strengthened by the promotion of the Vellalas, Shanaras (Nadaras), Adi-Dravidas and the Nattampadis, who constrasted favourably with the Maravar and suited the aims of revenue, security and conversion. Among these, the Vellalas acquired the most favoured status for the following reasons:

(A) They were, according to the 1871 Madras census report, "a peace loving, frugal, and industrious people". They were essential to consolidating the new revenue and the Administrative Manual (Coimbatore) noted that the Vellalas were "truly the backbone of the district. It is they who by their industry and frugality create and develop wealth, support the administration, and find the money for imperial and district demands."

(B) It was ascertained that "according to native ideas", husbandry was their only proper means of livelihood and that they had no established traditions of kingship, like Kallar and Maravar. The Madurai Manual noted that Aryanayaga Mudali, the great general of the sixteenth century was dissuaded from making himself a king on the ground that no Vellalan ought to be a king.

(C) They were found suitable for the expanding manpower needs of British administration. They were unsurpassed as accountants and many of them were employed as Karnams or village accountants.

(D) They were extremely conservative in their outlook. The Tanjore Manual observed, "in religious observances, they are more strict than the generaliry of of Brahmins; they abstain from both intoxicating liquors and meat."

It is in this milieu that the Dravidian movement took shape as the pro-British of the de-martialized Tamil social order.

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Letter of Correspondent M.Raja Joganantham[Colombo 6]:

Militarism and Caste

[Lanka Guardian, July 15, 1992, p.16]

With the reference to the above article in Lanka Guardian (1 July) 1992. In the article [by] the writer Mr. D.P.Sivaram, some facts are incorrectly stated. The statement a strong narrative is found in Myliddy is correct. The names of the chieftains are Veera Maniccathevan, Periya Nadduthevan & Narasinhathevan. The statement that the Marava chieftains and their castemen married among Karaiyar of the village is also correct. But the statement about Thuraiyar and Panivar is incorrect.

The clans known as Thuraiyar and Panivar in this village are the descendants of the ancient families of Myliddy. The martial arts of Marava are popular among these two clans, though the Thuraiyar is considered as superior. Thuraiyar as well as Panivar were connected by marriage to Ramnad, the home country of the Maravar, for which evidence is available.

I am one of the descendants of the ancient family of the village, and the writer of an article titled as, ‘Ancient Villages in Jaffna’, which appeared in Eelanadu on 13.07[July] 1986.

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Posted May 18, 2005

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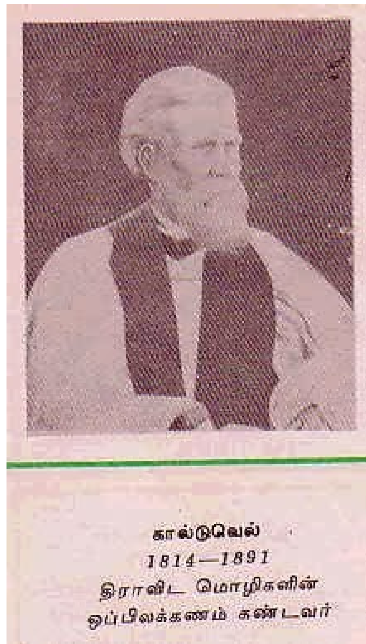
'தமிழக இராணுவயியல்-2'-DPSivaram - 6

காலடுவெல் குறிப்புகளில் மறவர் ஜாதி

On Tamil Militarism ; an 11 part essay by D.P.Sivaram written in 1992 Part 6: Bishop Caldwell and the Tamil Dravidians by D.P. Sivaram

[courtesy: Lanka Guardian, August 1, 1992, pp.11-12 and 24; prepared by Sachi Sri Kantha, for the electronic record]

ராபர்ட் கால்டுவெல் "திராவிட தந்தை" என அறியப்படுகின்றார்.அவர் மறவர் பாளையக்காரர்களின் பூமி என அழைக்கபடும் திருநெல்வேலியில் வாழ்ந்தவர்.அவர் தமிழக போர்க்குலங்கள் முதலாக திராவிட மொழிகளை பற்றி நிறைய ஆரய்ந்துள்ளார். அதில் சம்ஸ்கிருத மொழியை தவிர மற்றவையெல்லாம் ஒரே மூலமான திராவிடத்தை கொண்டவை.



Robert Caldwell (1819-1891) was the father of the Dravidian movement. He was the Bishop of Tinnevely – the heartland of the Maravar Poligars – during the times when the British were engaged in suppressing the Tamil military castes in the Tamil region. His monumental work, The Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages, which was published in 1856, laid the theoretical foundation of the political, academic and cultural movement that came to dominate Tamilian life in the twentieth century. The work argues that all south Indian languages (and a few others elsewhere in the subcontinent, like Brahui) belong to a distinct family of tongues called the Dravidian languages. This challenged the widely held view of the time that most of India's cultivated languages were derived from Sanskrit.

It followed therefore that the culture and civilization of the Dravidian peoples of south India were intrinsically unique. The role of these ideas in the inception of the Dravidian movement has been examined in detail elsewhere (Irshick; 1969, Hardgrave; 1965, Sivathamby:1978). These studies have been in terms of the cultural and political contradictions between the newly arisen non-Brahmin elites and the Brahmins who had achieved a pre-eminent place under colonial rule in the Madras Presidency.

The intention of this study however is to show that the fundamental tenets of the nascent phase of the Dravidian ideology were essentially linked to the political and cultural legacies of the British attempt to demilitarize Tamil society. The writings of Bishop Caldwell presuppose a teleological project which was not uncommon to what were conceived as great intellectual undertakings in that era of empire building. The assumptions of the project formed the basis of his Dravidian theory. They were,

அவரது காலத்தில் ஆங்கிலேய அரசு தமிழர்களுக்கு மத்தியில் போர்கலைகளின் பயிற்ச்சியை முதலில் தடை செய்தது

[Demiltraised act]. (a) That the British empire was destined to finally bring order amongst Tamils, a large portion of whom had been more prone to the habit of war than to the arts of peace from the dawn of history in south India,

அவரது குறிப்புகளில் ஆங்கிலேயர் மறவர் சமூகத்துக்கு முற்றிலும் எதிரானவராகவும் அடக்கு முறையை தினிப்பவராகவும் திகழ்ந்தனர்.கால்டுவெல்லின் குறிப்புகளில் மறவரே உண்மையான

தமிழ்மக்கள் என கூறுகின்றார். ஆனால் வெள்ளாளரை திராவிடர் என கூறுகிறார். (b) That this order would be the one in which the imminent protestant ethos of the Dravidian civilization would reach its full expressional ethos which the English administrator saw as the virtue of those classes which "**contrasted favourably with the Maravar", and whom the Bishop considered the legitimate Tamilians,**

(c) That the rediscovery of Dravidian linguistic and cultural uniqueness would help consolidate the position of the 'lower classes' among the Tamils who had played an important role in the military expansion of British rule in the subcontinent - the Tamil Christian soldiers who were the Empire's alternative to the traditional Tamil military castes.

In the concluding remarks of his 'A History of Tinnevely'(1888), Caldwell says, "A mixed government…came thus to an end and was succeeded by a government purely English, at unity with itself, and as just as it was powerful. The results of this change have been most important and valuable. Professor Wilson…places in a striking light the course things would have taken if the English Government had not been enabled to interpose its authority. It may be concluded," he says, "that had not a wise and powerful policy interfered to enforce the habits of social life, the fine districts to the south of Kaveri…would have reverted to the state in which tradition describes them long anterior to Christianity, and would have once more have become a suitable domicile for the goblins of Ravana."

அவரது வரையறை திருநேல்வேலியின் நடைமுறை காரணிகளிலும் பழையா பாண்டிய நாட்டின் கன் தனது ஆய்வை மேற்கொண்டார்.

The first reflection that arises in one's mind on reading the foregoing sketch of the history of this district is, that war seems to have been the normal condition of Tinnevely, as of the rest of the old Pandya country…from the beginning of man's abode in these regions till A.D. 1801 (the year in which the Tamil country was ceded to the British). Caldwell also notes that, "Of the beneficial changes that have taken place since then, the most remarkable is that which we see in the Poligars themselves." He claims with satisfaction that many among the regions martial classes were taking to agriculture; and of the Maravar, he says "the change wrought amongst the poorer class of the Maravas is not perhaps quite so complete…though once the terror of the country they are now amenable to law and reason…" Tamil society was thus 'unity with itself' and was realising its destiny under the British Empire. He asserts that "Race after race of rulers have risen up in this country, has been tried and found wanting, and has passed away." But that the Tamils "accept our government readily and willingly as the best government they have ever had and the best they are likely to have in this age of the world." அவர் மறவர்களை "இறுதி மன்னர் இனம்" என குறிப்பிடுகின்றார். Under the "paternal government" of the English, Tamils were becoming a peaceful and industrious nation. The last "race of rulers" which had risen up and passed away in the Tamil country were the turbulent Maravar. English rule was the only one that was not found wanting because its principles and protestant ethos were in consonance with what Caldwell assumed were the 'true' religious and moral ideas of the Dravidian race.

Although as a historian, he was well aware of the hegemony of the Maravar's martial culture in Tamil society, its exclusion from what he desired to portray as the true Dravidian civilization was central to the imperial and religious interests of Caldwell's teleologial project. The English, in suppressing the martial castes, were restoring the soverignty of Tamil society's "legitimate rulers" - the peasantry and lower classes. In Caldwell's view, the Tamil military castes had to seek "the safer and more reputable occupation of husbandmen" (Caldwell: 1888, p.229). However, he was deeply suspicious of their peace.

Commenting on the Poligar wars, he wrote, "The population of the sequestered Pollams (Palayams) seemed to be delighted with the opportunity afforded them of trying their strength with the English once more, being thoroughly discontented, no doubt, with the peaceful life now required of them" (p.197). And he condemned a suggestion ventured by the author of the Tinnevely Manual, Mr.Stuart that the Palayam system of the Tamil military castes was histocially inevitable as the fiefdoms of medieval Europe - "It is so seldom that one hears a good word about Poligars that I quote these remarks of Mr.Stuart with pleasure…I fear, however, that the misdeeds of the Poligars were more systematic and audacious than those of the feudal nobles of Europe in the Middle Ages." (p.59)

மறவர் தனது வன்முறையை சானார் இனத்துக்கு எதிராக பிரயோகித்தனர் அவர்கள் மீது கட்டவிழ்த்து விடப்பட்டுள்ள இரத்தக்களரி வன்முறை பயந்து ஏராளமான சாணார்கள் (கிருத்துவ)பிராட்டஸ்டன்ட் மதத்தை தழுவினர்.

மறவரின் போர் வன்மையும்,பிராமனர்களின் சம்ஸ்கிருத கலச்சாரமும் வளர்ந்து வரும் கிருத்துவ மதமாக்களுக்கு எதிராக இருந்தது. ஆங்கில அரசும், கிருத்துவ சர்ச்சுகளும் மறவர்களுக்கு எதிரான "இராணுவ மறுப்பு கொள்கையை" புகுத்த முற்பட்டனர். மறவரின் வீரமிக்க பழக்கம் மற்றும் பிராமணர்களின் சமஸ்கிருத கலாச்சாரம் சமூக ஒழுங்கு இவை 'உண்மையான' திராவிடர்கள் தார்மீக கொள்கைகளை புறம்பானவை'. எனவே மறவர்கள் திராவிடர்கள் அல்ல அவர்கள். அவர்கள் தமிழினத்தை சார்ந்தனர்.

Apart from concerns shared with the British Government, the Bishop's hostile attitude towards the **Maravar arose from the bloody violence they unleashed on the Shanar, large numbers of whom were embracing the Protestant faith.** For him, if the idolatory and the Sanskritic culture of the articulate Brahmins was a spiritual threat to the propagation of the Gospel, the violence and misdeeds of the Maravar against the faithful was a dire physical threat. In his scheme of Tamilian history, the culture and ethos of the classes through whom the British government and the Anglican Church sought to consolidate the gains of Tamil society's demilitarization were seen by Caldwell as the true characteristics of the Tamils. The martial habits of the Maravar and the Sanskritic culture of the Brahmins were alien to the social order and moral ideals of the 'true' Dravidians.

These views were shared by many English missionaries of the 19th century who worked among the Tamils. Missionaries and administrators found evidence for this in many religious and didactic Tamil texts. Henry Martyn Scudder published a book in 1865, in which he "used Tamil texts and poems to support the missionary position that even in ancient Tamil texts many Christian ideas were present." (Irshick; 1976, p.15). This belief led to the introduction of what were thought to be Tamil works, with little or no extraneous influence in institutions of higher education run by missionaries. The college curriculum created a market for the publication of such works. This in turn gave an impetus to the rediscovery of many ancient Tamil works (U.V.Saminatha Iyer; En Sarithiram, p.714)., which paradoxically led to the publication of Purananooru and the Purapporul Venba Malai, texts that portrayed the ancient Tamils as a fierce martial race and lay the foundation of modern Tamil militarism. Thus Caldwell's teleology assumed that Tamil revivalism would help consolidate the protestant ethic and the allegiance to English rule among the non-military castes in Tamil society, by giving expression to the moral and religious ideas which he assumed were imminent in their ancient Dravidian culture and language.

மதுரை மானுவலில் மறவர்கள் அதிகமாக வாழ்ந்தனர். சாணாரை பற்றி குறிப்பிட்ட அவர்.அவர்கள்

கிருத்துவராக வளர்ந்ததால் அவர்கள் கல்வி அறிவால் முன்னேற்றம் அடைந்தனர்.

The administrative manual of the Madurai district commended a section of this class of Tamils thus, "They…contrast favourably with the Maravars, being very orderly, frugal, and industrious". Other section, the Shanar it was stated, "have risen enormously in the social scale by their eagerness for education, by their large adoption of Christianity, and by their thrifty habits. Many of them have forced themselves ahead of the Maravars by sheer force of character." (Thurston: 1906, p.373). It was to these 'loyal' classes of Tamils that Caldwell referred to when he wrote in the introduction to his Grammar that

"All throughout Ceylon, the coolies in the coffee plantations are Tamilians; the majority of the money-making classes even in Colombo are Tamilians; and it seems not unlikely that [?]ere long the Tamilians will have excluded the Singhalese from almost every profitable employment in their own Island. The majority of the Klings or Hindus, who are found in Pegu, Penang, Singapore and other places in further East, are Tamilians; a large portion of the Coolies who have emigrated in such numbers to the Mauritius and to the West Indian colonies are Tamilians; in short wherever money is to be made, wherever a more apathetic or a more aristocratic people is waiting to be pushed aside, thither swarm the Tamilians, the Greeks or Scotch of the East, the least superstitious and the most enterprising and persevering race of Hindus." (Caldwell: 1856, p.7).

Caldwell's Dravidian theory thus gave rise to a vocabulary in which the word Tamil came to connote the non-Brahmin, non-martial aspects of Tamil culture. Bishop Robert Caldwell in laying the foundation of the Dravidian movement also endeavoured and partially succeeded in dispersing the impression that the Tamils who, only a few years before his time were thought of as being "prone to the habit of war", were a peace loving and industrious nation. The intellectual endeavours of the learned missionary made the British Empire cherish an ulterior hope that the 'Dravidian' Tamils would remain the faithful among the faithless, the bedrock of the Raj for a long time to come - the events of the great mutiny and the rise of the Dravidian movement proved them correct.

Note I am thankful to Mr.Joganathan of Wellawatte for drawing my attention to the fact that the Panivar clan of Myliddy is also connected to Ramnad. My information, however, was based on (a) Place Name Studies - Kankesanthurai Circuit, by Dr. E. Balasunderam of the Jaffna University, 1988, pp.5-6. The book was published for the Mani Vizha of S. Appadurai of Myliddy. (b) An interview with Mr. Ratnalingam of Myliddy, politburo member of a Tamil militant group who I believe is a relative of Mr. Joganathan. The foot-notes could not appear due to an unavoidable circumstance.

தமிழக இராணுவயியல்'-7-DPSivaram - 7

On Tamil Militarism ; an 11 part essay by D.P.Sivaram written in 1992

Part 7: The Tamil Soldier and the Dravidian Diaspora

by D.P. Sivaram

[courtesy: *Lanka Guardian*, August 15, 1992, pp.12-13 and 28; prepared by Sachi Sri Kantha, for the electronic record]

சாளரம்

The idea of the ‘modern Indian army’ is rarely associated with the Tamils. The nature or its ethnic composition generates the impression that it is a predominantly north Indian phenomenon. This impression has become so strongly established that the military history of the British Empire’s rise has been studied in recent times in connection with the role of the ‘martial peoples’ of north India in the British Indian army. The tenacity and power of this ‘impression’ in modern scholarship is best illustrated in the argument of David Washbrook:

"The role the British Indian army played in international affairs over the course of the 19th century however, lifts it out of the context of British Indian relations and places it in a broader global perspective. It was not an army intended primarily for domestic defence and police duties in India. Rather, it was the army of British Imperialism, formal and informal, which operated worldwide, opening up markets to the products of industrial revolution, subordinating labour forces to the dominating of capital and bringing to ‘benighted’ civilizations the enlightened values of Christianity and Rationality. The Indian army was the iron fist in the velvet glove of Victorian expansionism.Moreover, because the British Empire was the principal agency through which the world system functioned in this era, the Indian army was in a real sense the major coercive force behind the internationalization of industrial capitalism. Paradoxically (or not!), the martialization of north Indian society and, in many ways the feudalization of its agrarian relations, were direct corrolaries of the development of capitalism on a world scale during the 19th century." (Washbrook: 1990)

Washbrook’s view is based on what the Indian army was towards the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is underpinned by an "impression" which arose many years after the British had established their strategic hold on India and had laid the Empire’s foundation with what was known as their ‘Coastal Army’ which was built up in the latter half of the 18th century, mainly with Tamil soldiers. The British succeeded in empire-building not by martialising dominant north Indian military caste communities, but by building up a cheap but loyal and effective army of predominantly Tamil soldiers. Until the latter half of the 19th century, it was the Tamil Christian soldier who was the main coercive force behind the expansion of the Empire in the subcontinent and elsewhere.

The British recruitment handbook for Madras classes, says *"It can truthfully be said that the Coast Army was mainly instrumental in conquering India for the British."* (p.8) The Tamil soldier was seen as the bearer of the Sword and the Bible - with few religious and caste prejudices which madehim suitable for expeditions beyond the sea unlike his more expensive brethren in north India. Contrary to what Washbrook claims, the early phase of British overseas expansion in East, West and South Asia was not based on the martialisation of north Indian society, but on the south Indian alternative to its military labour market - the loyal classes of Tamils.

"During this whole period, as always throughout its existence, the Coast Army was specially noteworthy for the cheerful alacrity with which its regiments have volunteered of service overseas. The Bengal regiments on many occasions refused to embark for foreign service, on the plea that it was contrary to their religion. But the Coast Army willingly embarked, and took a leading part in many successful expeditions, including Manila (1762), Mahe (1779), Ceylon (1782 and 1795), Amboyna and the Spice Islands (1796), Egypt (1801-02), Bourbon and Mauritius (1810) and Java (1811-12)".

The Coast Army took part in the final expedition against the King of Kandy which was followed by the first war in Burma (1824-26). The first war by the British in China was also fought by them in 1840-42 where the 37th Madras Infantry was made grenadier battalion for its distinguished conduct. Sir Hugh Gough reported on their service in the China war that "their perseverance and gallantry before the enemy have secured for them the confidence of the British European soldiers." (Recruitment Handbook for Madras Classes, p.6)

Even a brief study of the history of the Coast Army and the Tamil soldiers who were recruited into it would reveal that the

‘military agency’ which "conveyed British capitalist power to areas of the world (including the South Asian hinterland) it could not otherwise have reached" had a very small proportion of north Indian military groups. Washbrook’s argument that the World Capitalist system which the British Empire helped so much to expand rested heavily on the intermediation of the Indian army and that without it and similar agencies constituted outside the European capitalism core, "the forces of world capitalism would have been ethnic, much weaker or else of a very different kind" is plausible but the argument that harnessing the dynamic potential of the readily available north Indian military groups made it cheaper for the British to rapidly expand their empire, is untenable in view of the two most critical phases which determined the hold of the English on the subcontinent.

The first phase begins towards the middle of the 18th century. It was the contest with the French that first compelled the British to abandon their policy in India till then, that was was bad for trade, and raise local troops. There was in the subcontinent at that time paramilitary caste groups whose services could be obtained for a fee. The British unlike the great Indian princedoms in that era could not afford the soldiery of the high caste martial groups although they very much desired them. From the proceedings of the government, dated 7th May 1770, it appears that the Sepoy battalions then consisted of Mohamedans, Tamils and Telugus, but no details of caste are given. It may be inferred that the number of Brahmans, Rajputs and Maharattas in the Madras army was very small. It is clear that the authorities were desirous of restricting enlistments to men of good caste, but it is equally clear that this wasnot practicable during the last (18th) century."

Again in 1795, it is stated that "owing to the small pay of the sepoy and the high price of rice, considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining good recruits, and the battalions were kept up to their proper strength by accepting undersized men and those of low caste." (Phytian Adams: 1943). Yet Stringer Lawrence and Clive succeeded in making the cheap low caste Tamil sepoys into an army with which the English were able to establish themselves as the main European trading group in India, in the contest with the French. It later won all the crucial battles that subjugated most of India during the course of the seventy five years since recruitment of the first Tamil sepoy levies began in the northern parts of Tamilnadu in 1746.

The East India company established its first military department at Madras in 1752. The main reason behind the rapid rise of the British in this era was their low cost but hardy army. The major Indian kingdoms of the time, although possessed of modern and larger forces were falling into financial difficulties in maintaining their expensive high caste soldiery whose pay arrears was frequent cause for mutiny. The English fought with the advantage of an extremely loyal army which did not rebel for pay. The Recruitment Handbook of the Madras classes records "never were these qualities more fully tried than in the war with Hyder. The pay of the army was sixteen months in arrears, famine raged all over the country, the enemy was at the gates offering large bounty and pay to our Sepoys to desert, but in vain. Under all these circumstances severe action were fought. Their conduct during the war excited the admiration of all who knew it, and Frederick the Great of Prussia was known to have said, "after reading Orme’s account of the war, that had he the command of troops who acted like the sepoys on that occasion, he could conquer all Europe."(9)

The second crucial phase in which the future of the British as an Empire building power was determined was the period in which the Indian Mutiny erupted in North India. Again, it was the loyal Coast Army that helped the English survive the Mutiny. It was the Mutiny that made the British reorganize the Indian army into that form which Washbrook considers in his thesis.

"In 1857-58, came the great Mutiny of the army in Bengal, when the Coast Army displayed its loyalty and devotion in no uncertain manner. In a despatch dated the 19th August 1859, the Secretary of State of India said, ‘The commander-in-chiefs Minute contains only a slight sketch of the important services rendered by the Madras army during the great contest in the North of India. The great fact has been the perfect fidelity of that army and the perfect loyalty of the 23 millions of persons who inhabit this Presidency, which enabled the resources of the South of India to be freely put forth in support of our hard-pressed country men in North." Lieut-General Sir Patrick Grant said,

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"The services in the field of the Troops of this Presidency employed in the suppression or the Rebellion and the Mutiny are now a matter of history, and the glowing terms in which they have been recognized must endure for ever, an unperishable record of this noble soldiers. **It can never be forgotten that, to their immortal honour, the native troop of the Madras army have been, in the words of the Earl of Ellenborough, faithful found among the faithless.**"

The Dravidian ideology was underpinned by the idea of the loyal Tamil soldier of British Coast Army, bringing to "benighted" civilizations the enlightened values of Christianity and Rationality. Caldwell and his successors elaborated a theory of a Tamil Diaspora as the bedrock of Protestantism and the English Empire on this idea.

Bishop N.C.Sargant, who like Caldwell, was the Church of England's Bishop of Tinnevely spells it out clearly in his 'Dispersion of the Tamil Church':

"The Tamils are great soldiers; they went with the army along with their families and lived in its newly established camps and in the newly captured territories…they were excellent instruments for establishing the Church among the Telugu and Kannada speaking peoples." **"There is much evidence to show that Tamil soldiers - of the British Indian Army - and those (Tamils) who followed the army took the gospel with them to the other parts of India."** (Sargant: 1940, p.32 and p.68)

About the intention of his word, Sargant says, "The Dispersion of the Jews was a preparation for the spread of Christianity in the ancient world. Similarly can it be said that the Dispersion of the Tamil church helped the missionaries? The first Apostles found some God feating Jews, as their first believers. Did the missionaries find the Tamils perceptive…was this race the first fruit of Christian work? I tried to find answers to such questions…This research made me understand that Christ realised many unexpected and inexplicable things through the Dispersion of the Tamils and the Tamil Church."

Sargant, like Caldwell and Bishop Whitehead before him, believed that research into ancient Dravidian forms of expression found in Tamil would reveal that there were many surprising words and ideas which denoted Christian concepts such as that of sin. "Like the ancient Hebrews the ancient Dravidians also tried to lead a righteous spiritual life."(p.3) The close connection between the British Indian army's early conquests, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.), the Dispersion of the English Church, and the Tamils of Bishop Caldwell's flock in Tinnevely is described by Sargant in detail (chapters 2, 3, 5). Thus the Tamil soldier, the Tamil Diaspora and the Dravidian movement came to constitute a basis of the British Imperial project.

The nationalist reaction to this project in the Tamil country, articulated by the terrorist movement, proclaimed modern Tamil militarism as the means of national emancipation from British rule.

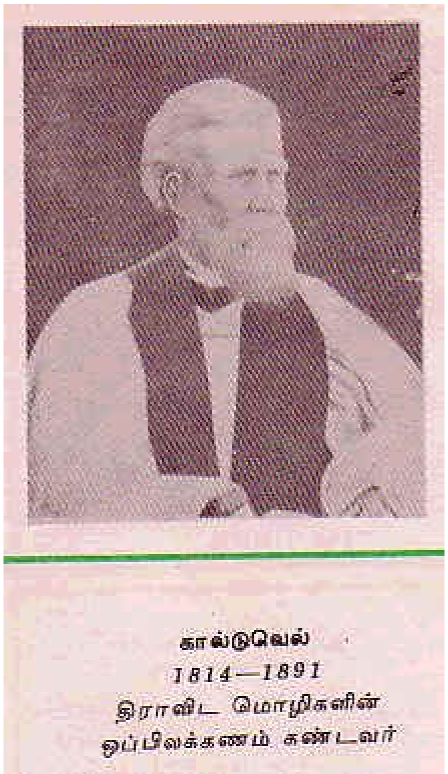
On Tamil Militarism ; an 11 part essay by D.P.Sivaram written in 1992 - 8

Part 8: The Twin Narratives of Tamil Nationalism

by D.P. Sivaram

[courtesy: *Lanka Guardian*, September 1, 1992, pp.10-12; prepared by Sachi Sri Kantha, for the electronic record]

At the turn of the Twentieth century Tamil nationalism was articulated in terms of two different interpretations of Tamilian identity, propagated by two distinct movements which were politically opposed to each other. The one was the Dravidian school; the other was the Indian revolutionary movement. The former was closely associated with English missionaries and unequivocally supported British rule; the latter strongly opposed the Raj and preached violence as the chief means of national emancipation from foreign domination.



Bishop Caldwell

The discourse that may be identified today as Tamil nationalism is constituted at its basis by these two interpretations - or more appropriately 'founding' narratives - which contended with each other to offer authentic readings of the Tamilian past and present, of what 'really' constituted Tamilian identity. The Dravidian school gave political and academic form to linguistic ethno-nationalism; the revolutionary movement turned traditional Tamil militarism into a liberation ideology, which evolved into militarist ethno-nationalism. The militarist reading has also characterised Tamil ethno-nationalism in the twentieth century not merely because it was "constructed and deployed to advance the interests and claims of the collectivity, banded and mobilized as a pressure group" but also because, as this study intends to show, it appealed to, and arose out of the structures of experience produced and reproduced through folk culture and religion in rural Tamilnadu.

This is how, as we shall see later, MGR became Madurai Veeran, the warrior god of a numerous scheduled caste in Periyar district in Tamilnadu. Jeyalalitha contested from an electorate there in the last election [i.e., 1991 general election]. However, it is essential to understand the politics behind the claims and silences of the early Dravidian school of Tamil revivalism and 'historiography' for examining the rise of modern Tamil militarism.

Caldwell and his followers who wrote and spoke about Tamil culture and history endeavoured to show that Tamils were essentially a peaceful people who had achieved a high level of civilization independent of and prior to the arrival of the 'Aryans' in the Indian subcontinent. This was the unique Dravidian civilization. The theory of Dravidian linguistic and hence cultural independence also contained in it the idea that the Tamils were originally a class of peaceful farmers. The politics of Caldwell's teleology compelled him [to] introduce this idea into his writings. (It was seen earlier that it arose from the attitude he shared with the English rulers towards the Maravar.) The views of Bishop Caldwell were found to be extremely useful by the newly arisen Vellala elite which was contending for higher status in the Varna hierarchy of caste. Therefore the 'histories' which were written by the Dravidian school of Tamil studies at the turn of the [20th] century were underpinned by,

(a) The political and religious concerns of Caldwell and other missionaries like Henry Martyn Scudder and G.U.Pope

(b) The caste politics of Vellala upward mobility.

The interests of both were intertwined. Their express political interest was to show that Tamil culture in essence was pre-Aryan-Brahmin and non-martial. The first non-Brahmin Tamils to take up the Dravidian theory to examine theTamil past belonged to the Vellala elite and were supported and encouraged by Protestant missionaries (and sometimes by English administrators). The writings of Professor Sunderam Pillai of the Trivandrum University on Tamil history and culture inspired many of his castemen who had been seething at being classified as Sudras by the Brahmins, and worse, by the British caste census and courts of law as well.



பெ. சுந்தரனார்
1855—1897
மன்னுபுகழ் 'மனோன்மணீயம்'
படைத்தவர்

Prof. Sunderam Pillai

Thus, the historical works of the early Dravidian school were produced as "social charters directed toward the census, where the decennial designation of caste status became a major focus for contests over rank between 1870 and 1930. The first Dravidian history of the Tamils, '*The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*', was written by V.Kanakasabhai Pillai, a Vellala from Jaffna who was a civil servant in Madras. Edgar Thurston thought it appropriate to quote the following excerpt from that work, in the section dealing with the Vellala caste in his '*Castes and Tribes of South India*'.

"Among the pure Tamils, the class most honoured was the *Arivar* or Sages. Next in rank to the *Arivar* were *Ulavar* or farmers. The Arivar were ascetics, **but of men living in society the farmers occupied the highest position. They formed the nobility, or the landed aristocracy, of the country**. They were also called *Vellalar*, the lords of the flood or karalar, lords of the clouds…The Chera, Chola and Pandyan kings and most of the petty chiefs of Tamilakam, belonged to the tribe of Vellalas." (Thurston, 1906: p.367-368)

The efforts of the early Dravidian school of Tamil 'historiography' culminated in the work of Maraimalai Atikal - the founder of the Pure Tamil movement which became a powerful force in the anti-Hindi struggles from 1928 onwards. He published a book called, '*Vellalar Nakareekam*' - The Civilisation of the Vellalas - in 1923. The book was a lecture he had given at the Jaffna town hall on January 1, 1922 on the 'Civilization of the Tamils' A contribution of Rs.200 was made in Jaffna towards the publication of the lecture, as a book. The Jaffna Vellala of that time saw his interests as being bound with that of his castemen in South India, who were attempting to rid themselves of the Sudra status assigned to them in the Varna hierarchy of caste by Brahmins.



வி. கனகசபையார்
1855—1906
'ஆயிரத்தெண்ணூறு ஆண்டுகட்கு
முற்பட்ட தமிழகம்' எனும்
அரிய நூல் படைத்தவர்

Prof. V. Kanagasabai Pillai

However, Maraimalai Atikal had decided to publish it as a book in order to refute a claim in the caste journal of the Nattukottai Chetti community, that the Chetties did not marry among the Vellalas because they (the Vellalas) were Sudras. In the English preface to the work, Maraimalai Atikal says that his book

"is written in scrupulously pure Tamil style, setting forth at the same time views of a revolutionary character in the sphere of social religious and historical ideas of the Tamil people…In the first place attention is directed to Vellalas, the civilized agricultural class of the Tamils, and to their origin, and organization…it is shown that at a time when all the people except those who lived all along the equatorial regions were leading the life of hunters or nomads, these Vellalas attained perfection in the art of agriculture…and by means of navigation occupied the whole of India. When the Aryan hordes came from the north-west of Punjab and poured forth into the interior, it was the ten Vellala kings then ruling in the north that stopped their advance."

Maraimalai Atikal goes on to claim that the eighteen Tamil castes were created by the Vellalas for their service; that they (the Vellalas) were vegetarians fo the highest moral codes;that Saivism and the Saiva Siddhantha philosophy nurtured by the Vellalas for more than 3,500 years were the pre-Aryan religious heritage of the Tamils; that the classification of Vellalas as Sudras was the result of an insidious Aryan-Brahmin conspiracy. Maraimalai Atikal was also defending fellow Vellala Dravidian scholars and their claims against attacks and veiled criticisms of Brahmin Tamil academics, M.Srinivasa Aiyangar, a respected Brahmin Tamil scholar who had worked as an assistant to the superintendent of census for the Madras Presidency.

Mr.Stuart, had made a devastating attacking on the claims of the Dravidian school of Tamil historiography, which derived its authority from the 'scientific' philological works of Bishop Caldwell. He debunked the theory of the Caldwell-Vellala school that Tamil culture was constituted by the high moral virtues of an ancient race of peaceful cultivators, on the basis of what he had studied of the religion and culture of the Tamil country-side, as an officer of the census, and on the basis of 'pure' Tamil works that had been rediscovered towards the latter part of the 19th century.



Maraimalai Atikal

Srinivasa Aiyangar noted in his '*Tamil Studies*', "Within the last fifteen years a new school of Tamil scholars has come into being, consisting mainly of admirers and castemen of the late lamented professorand antiquary, Mr.Sunderam Pillai of Trivandrum." ***Aiyangar argued that contrary to the claims of the new school, the Tamils were a fierce race of martial predators***. He wrote,

"Again some of the Tamil districts abound with peculiar tomb stones called 'Virakkals' (hero stones). They were usually set upon graves of warriors that were slain in battle…The names of the deceased soldiers and their exploits are found inscribed on the stones which were decorated with garlands of peacock feathers or some kind of red flowers. Usually small canopies were put up over them. We give below a specimen of such an epitaph. A careful study of the *Purapporul Venba Malai* will doubtless convince the reader that **the ancient Tamils were, like the Assyrians and the Babylonians, a ferocious race of hunters and soldiers armed with bows and lances making war for the mere pleasure of slaying, ravaging and pillaging.** **Like them** the Tamils believed in evil spirits, astrology, omens and sorcery. They cared little for death. The following quotations from the above work will bear testimony to the characteristics of that virile race. (1) Garlanded with the entrails of the enemies they danced with lances held in their hands topside down. (2) They set fire to the fertile villages of their enemies, and (3) plundered their country and demolished their houses. (4) The devil's cook distributed the food boiled with the flesh of the slain, on the hearth of the crowned heads of fallen kings. With these compare same passages from the Assyrian stories of campaigns: 'I had some of them flapped in my presence and had the walls hung with their skins. I arranged their

heads like crown…All his villages I destroyed, desolated, burnt; I made the country desert.' And yet the early Dravidian are considered by Dr.Caldwell as the farmers of the best moral codes, and by the new school of non-Aryan Tamil scholars…"

Aiyangar even claims, "We have said that the Vellalas were pure Dravidians and that they were a military and dominant tribe. If so one could naturally ask, 'How could the ancestors of peaceful cultivators be a war-like race?" He argues that the etymology of the root *Vel* is connected to war and weapons, that it was not uncommon for cultivating castes to have been martial tribes in former days as in the case of the Nayar, the Pillai, the Bants, etc. He also cites an official census of the Tamil population in the Madras Presidency, which shows that Tamil castes with a claim to traditional marital status constituted twenty six percent of the total number of Tamils in the Presidency. (Srinivasa Aiyangar; 1915, pp.40-58)

'தமிழக இராணுவயியல்'-3-DPSivaram - 9

பாரதியின் பார்வையில் தமிழக போர்க்குடிகள்

மறவரே தமிழகத்தின் சத்திரியர்

On Tamil Militarism ; an 11 part essay by D.P.Sivaram written in 1992

Part 9: Bharathy and the Legitimation of Militarism

by D.P. Sivaram

[courtesy: Lanka Guardian, October 1, 1992, pp.6-8; prepared by Sachi Sri Kantha, for the electronic record]

One of the main figures of the Indian revolutionary movement in Tamilnadu at the turn of the [20th] century was Maha Kavi Subramaniya Bharathy. One of its sympathisers was the Tamil scholar M.Raghava Aiyangar, who was the court pundit of the Maravar kings of Ramnad. Subramaniya Bharathy has been one of the most powerful influences in Tamilian cultural and political life in the twentieth century. The fundamental idea of modern Tamil militarism - that the Tamils were a martial race and that the rejuvenation of their martial traditions is necessary for national liberation, was enunciated by these two Brahmins in the first decade of the twentieth century. This idea has informed Tamil scholarship as well as the narratives of militant Tamil nationalism since then. It has been reproduced in many forms but its fundamental structure has remained the same. This narrative has been a basis of the vocabulary of Tamil nationalism in (a) The Indian revolutionary movement in Tamilnadu, (b) The Indian National movement in Tamilnadu, (c) The DK's secessionist and Anti-Hindi movement, (d) Caste revivalist movements in Tamilnadu, (e) The DMK, (f) The Federal Party in Sri Lanka, and (g) The armed Tamil separatist movement in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

Subramanya Bharathy

Thilak's idea that the kshatriya class of India that had been disfranchised by the British, had to reasert itself in the struggle for the nation's emancipation was more real and immediate to Bharathy, because he came from a Brahmin family from Tinnevely in the deep south, that had served the Poligars of Ettayapuram. He was hence, acutely aware of the traditional status of the Maravar in Tamil society and what had befallen them under the British. The great famine of 1876 had brought untold suffering upon the people in the deep south and had led to a further decline in the standing of the poorer sections of

the Maravar. They were constantly harassed by the police which was formed by Brahmins and other non-military castes.

பாரதியின் பார்வையிலே தனது இனத்தில் உள்ள பிராமனர்கள் ஆங்கிலேயரிடம் வேலை பார்த்தவரை வெறுத்தார்.அவரின் என்னத்தில் தமிழ் நாட்டின் சத்திரியர்கள் மறவரே.

The poet, a Brahmin who had given up the holy thread, hated Brahminism and his castemen who were servile to the English. To Bharathy, the kshatriyas of Tamilnadu were the Maravar. (This view seems to have been common to Brahmin families that had served the Marava chieftains and kings. See also, Dirks; 1982; p.662). In a note to his 'Paanjali Sapatham', he says,

"Maram means valour - Veeram. Maravar are kshatriyar. Understand that, in our country, the class that is known now as Maravar are kshatriyar."

அவரின் பாஞ்சாலியின் சபதத்தில் மறம்வீரம-ஂ மறவர் என்றால் வீரர் எனவே மறவர் .வீரரே சத்திரியர் . .எண்கிறார் .வகுப்பரே சத்திரியர்

His 'Maravan's song' (Maravan Paattu) relates the predicament of the traditional Tamil military castes under British rule and urges the reassertion of the Maravar, and their martial reputation. He portrays his own castemen in the police as a wretched and greedy lot, abject before the English master, framing criminal cases against the Maravar and fleecing them under various pretexts.

"Alas, we have to dig the soil today to earn our wage. The might of our swords and spears are gone! A bad name has come upon us in this world…The times when we made war with bows, blowing our chanks, are now a thing of the past…Can we bring disgrace upon our great warriors of yore by selling our honour? Aren't we the valourous Maravar? Should we lead this useless life anymore?"

Thus the revival of traditional Tamil militarism - in its caste and broader cultural forms - was essentially linked to Bharathy's project of propagating and kindling Tamil nationalism among the masses as a means of national liberation. The project has continued to be at the centre of all political schemes that have invoked Tamil nationalism from his time.

Bharathy's convictions received a boost in September 1906, at the time when the activities of the revolutionaries were gathering momentum. It came from a talk given by U.V.Saminatha Aiyer on a poem from the Purananooru - an anthology of heroic Tamil poetry. U.V.Saminatha Aiyer, after many years of research, had discovered and published the Purananooru in 1894. It was considered to be one of the most ancient Tamil works. It is said that "the publication of Purananooru created a revolution in Tamilian thinking." (P.S.Mani; p.105. Bharathiyarum Thamil Pulavarhalum, 1981, Madras. "They - the Tigers - are writing the new Purananooru", Ulahath Thamilar, 1.5[May].1992)
The talk gave Bharathy what he was looking for - a sound basis for propagating the idea of reviving the martial spirit among the Tamils to achieve national liberation through violence. He wrote an editorial on the subject titled in English as 'Ancient Tamil Lady of Ever Sacred Memory', on 8.9[Sept].1906. The political life of Purananooru, the foundIt was a time when very

few Tamils knew about Purananooru or the Sangam corpus. He says,

"A Tamil work called Purananooru was written many centuries ago. It does not, like later works, relate Puranic fables. It tells of the condition of Tamilnadu in those times, the wars of the kings and many other natural events. A poem from this work was expounded by U.V.Saminatha Aiyer of the Madras Presidency College. There are some, who out of ignorance think that there is no use in learning Tamil and that it cannot inspire patriotism. Aiyer spoke on this poem to refute their erroneous notions. The poem is about the mother of a warrior (Rana Veeran). The woman had sent her son to the battle field, thinking that he will either die in war for his mother country or come back victorious. A liar came and told her that her son had taken fright and run away from the battle field. On hearing this the old woman exclaimed, 'Did I bring up a coward to whom his life was more important than the love for his nation? I shall go to the battle front and if he has done so, I shall hack these breasts that gave him suck and will die there.' Determined thus the old woman went to the field and was overjoyed to find her son slain in battle. She was at peace, because her son had given his life for his motherland. The woman's name is not known now. But only if Lord Isvara blesses the continent of Baratha with many such mothers in these times, a solution to all our problems could be found."

Bharathy draws a parallel here to the story of a Japanese mother who had lost all her sons in the war but was found crying that she did not have more sons to send to the battle front. There were books on Japan's victory over Russia like, 'The Russo-Japanese War' in circulation, particularly among the revolutionaries and their sympathisers at that time. The theme of the heroic Japanese mothers who nurtured the martial spirit in their sons during the 1905 war was emphasised in these books.

Japan's victory over Russia had inspired another nationalist minded Brahmin to write Parani poems (A form of Tamil war poetry sung for a warrior who slays 1,000 elephants in battle) hailing its martial example. This was M.Raghava Aiyangar, who was the editor of the Madurai Thamil Sangam's journal 'Senthamil.'

Current (establishment) literature in the West on the use of history in national liberation organizations and terrorist groups, refers to what these organizations endeavour to disperse among their members and their people as 'the' authentic reading of the nation's past and present, as projective narratives which are, it is claimed, "stories that not only recall the past, but also teach how to behave in the present."

"Narratives of this sort tell individuals how they would ideally have to live and die in order to contribute properly to their collectivity and its future."

It has been argued in an analysis which draws attention to the frequent use of these projective narratives by the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, that the members of the Army are not marginal outcastes from Armenian society, but that projective narratives transform them into "paradigmatic figures of its deepest values." (Gerald Cromer: 1991). The projective narratives that shaped militant Tamil nationalism and its idea of nationl liberation were formulated as a reassertion of feudal Tamil militarism and its traditional cultural hegemony in Tamil society.

This was so because they were eseentially linked to the Indian revolutionary movement's idea of reviving India's traditional martial heritage as a precondition for national liberation. The importance of chiefly Bharathy and to lesser extent Raghava Aiyangar in the rise of modern Tamil militarism lies in the fact that they initiated a political reading of the ancient Tamil text Purananooru, in particular- an anthology of predominantly heroic poems - and a heroic Tamilian past in general, as basis of a Tamilian concept of national liberation. Their reading was conceived as part of the Indian revolutionary movement's ideology of national liberation through armed insurrection.

It must be emphasised that they saw the Tamil martial tradition from a pan-Indian perspective. To them the heroic Tamil past was a reflection of a great Indian martial heritage, whereas the Dravidian school vehemently rejected the pan-Indian perspective as a myth promoted by Brahmin interests. Therefore the politics of the views propagated by Bharathy and Raghava Aiyangar have to be located at two levels; the pan-Indian and the south Indian.

At the first [pan-Indian] level, the following factors have to be considered; (a) British recruitment policy and its theory of martial races, (b) the cultural and political reaction to it among the educated Indian middle classes in Bengal and west India., (c) the kshatriya revivalism of Bal Ganghadar Thilak, (d) Japan's victory over Russia in 1905.

At the south Indian level, the following factors shaped the two men's thinking; (a) the movement for elevating the status of Tamil language, (b) the rediscovery of the Sangam anthologies, (c) the status and role of feudal Tamil militarism in Tamil society.

The shift in [military] recruitment to the northwest of the subcontinent toward the latter part of the 19th century was accompanied by the martial races theory which sought to elaborate the idea as to why some Indian people - Rajputs, Sikhs, Punjabi Muslims - were martial, while others - Marathas, Bengali upper castes, Mahars, Telugus and Tamils who had once been the predominant groups of the British Indian army - were not martial.

Lord Roberts of Kandahar, the commander in chief of the Indian army, 1885-1893, had made disparaging remarks about the martial character of the Tamils [and] Telugus who had once formed the backbone of the army's largest group of infantry units.

"Each cold season I made long tours in order to acquaint myself with the needs and capabilities of the men of the Madras Army. I tried hard to discover in them those fighting qualities which had distinguished their forefathers during the wars of the last and the beginning of the present century…and I was forced to the conclusion that the ancient military spirit had died in them."

It was reasoned that long years of peace in the south had had a softening effect on them. There were protests and petitions from the de-recruited classes including Tamils and Telugus. A need to prove their ancient martial character arose among many

classes that were thus affected.

At a Congress session in 1891, two Telugu Brahmins invoked the ancient Hindu law giver Manu in support of their contention that they were traditionally a war-like race, to refute Lord Robert's alleged slights against the Telugu people. These sentiments had been already exacerbated by the Arms Act of 1878 which prohibited Indians from possessing arms without permission. This was seen as a loss of self respect. Raja Rampal Singh protested against it at the second session of the National Congress in 1886,

"...But we cannot be grateful to it (the British Government) for degrading our natures, for systematically crushing out of us all martial spirit, for converting a race of soldiers into a timid flock of quill driving sheep." (Cohen; 1990, chapters 1, 2)

The Marathas had also been particularly affected by these developments. Thilak arose as a national leader among them. He propagated the view that the kshatriya class which had been disfranchised by the British had to rise again. They were the traditional defenders of the realm and internal order. National emancipation could be achieved through the rejuvenation of that class and the traditional Indian social order.

U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar

Thilak's ideas played an important role in the rise and dispersion of the Indian revolutionary movement. The movement got a big boost in 1905, when Japan defeated Russia. The victory demonstrated a point - that Asian martial spirit could prevail over European military might. Hence, for the revolutionaries (the Raj classified them as terrorists) India's emancipation lay in the revival of its traditional martial values. The impact of Japan's victory over Russia on the Indian revolutionary movement in Bengal and west India has been examined (in detail, in Dua: 1966).

At this time Subramaniya Bharathy was the editor of a nationalist Tamil paper called, 'India'. He was an ardent follower of Thilak and the revolutionary movement and was one of the few in Madras who were bold enough to propagate its ideas through his paper. On Thilak's fiftieth birthday, he wrote an editorial (14.7[July] 1906):

"The present condition of the country makes it necessary to have Veera Poojai (hero worship)...Veera Poojai is indispensable for a country's progress. The people of our country who have always keenly observed Veera Poojai, should not be slack at a time when it is most needed."

A note in the paper says that, Thilak's birthday was celebrated in Madras at Bharathy's house at Lingaya Chetty street and that a pooja had been held for India's martial goddess - Veera Sakthi - Bhavani (the goddess worshipped by the Maratha warrior king Shivaji). The revolutionary movement was spreading the Shivaji festival in many parts of India to rekindle the martial spirit which according to them had been systematically crushed out of the Indian nation and were establishing gymnasiums to improve its physical power.

Bharathy wrote an editorial titled in English as, 'The Outrage of the Arms Act', reminiscient of Raja Rampal Singh's outburst -

"An evil Viceroy called Lord Lytton introduced this Act in 1878. The people should have opposed it then. It is totally against divine law to make a great country's people cowards who cannot wield weapons." (1.12[Dec] 1906)

Again he wrote an editorial titled, ‘Are Indians Cowards?’, on Japan’s martial example. "A few Asiatics soundly beat hundreds and thousands of Russians. This is enough to show the valour of the Asians. The warrior’s heaven - Veera Swarkam - is better." (29.12 [Dec.] 1906)

He [Bharathy] was opposed to those who upheld the value of English education. The ideas of the revolutionary movement had to be rooted in Tamil culture and its deepest values; and they had to be spread among the ordinary Tamil masses. This could be done according to him only by adopting a simple style of writing Tamil. This view underlies his poems and songs through which he propagated the idea of the rejuvenation of the Tamil martial spirit as part of the India’s heroic reawakening and liberation.

"Amongst us, the Tamils, manliness is gone, valour is gone. We don’t have a country. We don’t have a government. Will Saraswathy (the goddess of learning) appear in this country in such a situation?"

"Tamil Nadu has not lost its wealth, independence, physical strength, and mental strength and has descended to a low state. Hence good poets disappeared from this country."

In his Puthiya Aathisoody (a book of moral aphorisms for children), he wrote, "Dismiss fear. Do not fail in courage. Learn the art of War."

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3. Nicholas B.Dirks; The pasts of a Palayakarar - The ethnohistory of a South Indian Little King. Journal of Asian Studies, vol.XLI, no.4, August 1982. "Many of my informants (Brahmins as well as Maravars and Kallars) have told me that the Mukkulathors - the three Tamil military castes - are really the kshatriyas of Southern India." Dirks deals with the Poligars (Palayakarars) of Othumalai, who belong to the Kondayam Kottai subsection of the Maravar, the group to which most of the Southern feudal military chieftainsbelonged. The Sethupathys - the kings of Ramnad - belong to the subsection known as Sembi Maravar.

4. R.P.Dua; 1966. The Impact of the Russo-Japanese (1905) War on Indian Politics, S.Chand, Delhi.

5. Gerald Cromer; In the Mirror of the Past - The use of history in the justification of terrorism and political violence. [Journal name is missing here, due to author’s or printer’s slip], vol.3, no.4, winter 1991. *****

Letter of Correspondent C.R.A.Hoole [Ontario, Canada]:

Tamil Military Caste

[Lanka Guardian, September 15, 1992, p.12]

D.P.Sivaram’s claim that Bishop Caldwell’s writing served to "demilitarize Tamil society" (August 1) discloses a fixation on Tamil martial prowess and warrior bravery. The fixation is more explicit in Mr.Sivaram’s account of the ‘Tamil military castes’ (May 1 - July 1). The account cannot however be taken as an accurate reading of Tamil history. It may be better understood as a charter, providing historiographical legitimacy for the present-day glorification of warrior-heroes who earn fame and honour

through gruesome deeds.

Crucial to his argument is the assertion that the pre-British society was dominated by martial values and only subsequently "under active British patronage the Vellala caste established its dominance, and its culture became representative and hegemonic in Tamil society" (May 15, p.18). Against this view, it may be pointed out that centuries before the Bishop launched his so-called pacification programme, the brahmans and their Vellala allies initiated a process of agrarian expansion that not only brought large tracts of land under cultivation, but its people under the sway of brahmanical values (B.Stein, 1980; B.Beck, 1979). Kallar and Maravar during the Chola times progressively converted their lands to peasant agriculture and also adopted Vellala titles. This process has been described as "Vellalization" or "brahmanization" and gave rise to the Tamil proverb, "Kallar, Maravar and Agambediyar becoming fat, turn into Vellalar". The caste society as we know it today, began to emerge from process in the tenth century, with its left-hand and right-hand structural divisions. It would then follow that the dominant values of the Tamil society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are typically caste values that is, "hierarchy" and "consensus" - in opposition to "conflict" (M.Moffat, An Untouchable Community in South India, 1979). In this context, the Kallar and Maravar who continued to inhabit the remaining marginal or peripheral tracts at this time, may be seen to represent a classical ethosthat was receding into oblivion.

There is no doubt that the Kallar and Maravar remained an irritant to the British Raj, as they had been to the Chola and Pandya overlords. On the other hand because they existed outside the larger caste society, neither a Kallan nor a Maravan could during the time become a paradigmatic figure worthy of imitation by the vast majority of the Tamils. In short, Mr.Sivaram has exaggerated their influence on the Tamil society during that period.

***** Letter of Correspondent T.Vanniasingham [Canada]:

Maravar Militarism

[Lanka Guardian, October 15, 1992, p.21]

Please permit me to say a few words about Mr.Sivaram’s essays on Tamil military castes. In his account he is illegitimately glorifying them. He seems to be implying that they were treated unambiguously with awe and veneratio, at the time of their exploits. Tamil literary documents of the period are not reliable on this score.Poets and bards were hired-hands in the service of chiefs and could be paid to praise and exaggerate their struggles and victories. In any case there are other Tamil poems that portray the Maravar as blood-thirsty savages, uncouth, undisciplined and lawless who lived by robbing unarmed travellers. The Silapathikaram for instance mentions them as practising "the glorious art of stripping travellers of their wealth - for the brave Maravar virtue lies in the heartlessness of plunder."

There is no doubt that they established kingdoms of their own - and at other times they were mercenaries in the pay of other kingdoms. In fact there were many ruling castes in ancient Tamil society. The Maravar were one such group. These many castes were always in contention for power and the Maravar won, at times. They were not overpowering and dominant all the time and over the entire territory. In this respect, Mr.Diulweva’s claims (Lanka Guardian, 1 Sept.’92) were quite correct. In fact it is possible to show that they were a "fierce maravar tribe - who prefer to die a glorious death on the battle field to a village funeral pyre," as the Silapadikaram puts it, they lacked a theory of government and civil society. For them a civil

society is not something that people live in but something that one robs and devours because the Maravar never produce anything. Long before the British came to suppress them, they had shown an inability to govern a civil society of many castes for any extended period of time. Governance needs intelligence, political wisdom, historical knowledge, forebearance and a capacity for trust, all of which, if we are to judge by the descriptions in the ancient Tamil texts, the Maravar conspicuously lack.

A readiness to kill and be killed, as we know only too well, is not the way to create a civilized society. *****

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Bishop Caldwell and the Tamil Dravidians

The Tamil Soldier and the Dravidian Diaspora

The Twin Narratives of Tamil Nationalismation text of Tamil militarism, begins in this editorial.

தமிழக இராணுவயியல்'-8-DPSivaram- 10 -

On Tamil Militarism ; an 11 part essay by D.P.Sivaram written in 1992

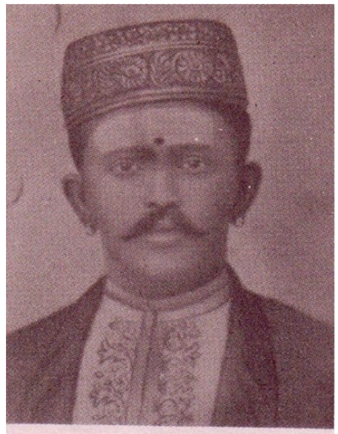
Part 10: Warrior Sons and Mothers

by D.P. Sivaram

[courtesy: *Lanka Guardian*, November 1, 1992, pp.17-18 and 20; prepared by Sachi Sri Kantha, for the electronic record]

The Madurai Thamil Sangam was established by Pandithurai Thevar in 1901 with the assistance of his cousin Bhaskara Sethupathy, who was the Raja of Ramnad at that time. The institution and its journal - the *Senthamil* - played an important role in what could be termed the Tamil renaissance in the first two decades of the twentieth century among the Tamils of south India and Sri Lanka. Its importance also lies in the fact that it created a class of Tamil pundits through a well organized and prestigious system of examinations at a time when strong objections were being raised against creating a Chair for Tamil, in the University of Madras.

Pandithurai Thevar



பொ. பாண்டித்துரைத் தேவர்
1867—1911
நான்காம் தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்
நலமுறக் கண்டவர்

The pundits qualified by the Madurai Thamil Sangam in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka have also been instrumental in shaping the vocabulary of Tamil identity when Tamil nationalism began to constitute itself as a political force on both sides of the Palk Straits. The Sangam was conceived as a nationalist project by Pandithurai Thevar who announced and took up the task of its formation at the Madras sessions of the Congress in 1901. Thevar upheld the view that "the love for one's language is the basis of patriotism and the love for one's religion." (Speech made at Tuticorin, quoted in P.S.Mani, p.39). Thevar's desire to establish the Sangam was also linked to the traditional role of the Maravar and Kallar kings and chieftains of Tamil Nadu as the patrons of Tamil poets and pundits, despite the powerful inroads made by Sanskrit over the centuries.

Most of the Tamil texts that impelled twentieth century renaissance were unearthed from collections of manuscripts preserved by families of traditional Tamil poets and scholars who had been patronised by Tamil poligars and kings. Thevar appointed R. Raghava Aiyangar who was the court pundit of the Sethupathys, as editor of the Sangam's journal '*Senthamil*' in 1901. His cousin, M.Raghava Aiyangar succeeded him as editor in 1904 and served for eight years. M.Raghava Aiyangar and his cousin belonged to a family of Vaishnavite Brahmins who had attached themselves to the Maravar kings of Ramnad from the eighteenth century. The family produced many Tamil and Sanskrit scholars who were court pundits and ministers to the Sethupathys and the nobles of their clan. M.Raghava Aiyangar's father was a renowned Tamil scholar in the court of Ponnuchami Thevar, the brother of the Ramnad king Muthuramalinga Sethupathy (1862-1873). Ponnuchamy Thevar was Arumuga Navalar's patron in Tamil Nadu. Aiyangar's father died when he was young and was looked after by Ponnuchami Thevar's son Pandithurai Thevar.

Thus, Aiyangar's life was bound with that of the Sethupathy clan of Marava rulers. Later in his life, he wrote a book in appreciation of Thevar and his father called, *Senthamil Valartha Thevarhal* (The Thevars who nurtured Sen Thamil). Aiyangar dedicated two of his most popular books to Bhaskara Sethupathy and Pandithurai Thevar. His involvement with the Indian nationalist movement was therefore closely related to the interests and perceptions of Thevar who was bestirred by the ideas of the revolutionaries and the Swadeshi movement. The Sethupathys had been resentful of the fact that they were coerced by the British to hand over the vast and profitable trade with Ceylon and Bengal. Thevar therefore was attracted by the Swadeshi movement's campaign to rejuvenate local industry and commerce to undermine the hold of British capital on India. The

revolutionaries were calling for the revival of the disfranchised kshatriya classes of India. The *Senthamil* incorporated these sentiments and ideas into its projects for Tamil renaissance.

Thevar formed the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company with V.O.Chidamparam Pillai in 1907, to break the British monopoly on the profitable Colombo-Tuticorin steamer service. Chidamparam Pillai was closely associated with members of the revolutionary movement in Tamil Nadu at that time. The company resolved in one of its articles of incorporation that it would contribute one percent of its monthly earnings to the Madurai Thamil Sangam, as long as it existed (*Annual Report of the Sangam*, 1907, pp.7-8). Aiyangar also contributed to the nationalist cause by buying a Rs.100 share in the company. The main financial assistance to the Sangam at this juncture came from Thondaman - the Kallar caste king of Pudukottai, who was its permanent patron, the Zamindar of Singam Patty (Maravar) and a Kallar caste leader called Gopalsamy Rajaliar, who had succeeded in a campaign with Thevar's assistance to alter his caste name from the derogatory *Kallan* to a more respectable form *Kallar* (*Annual Report of Sangam*, 1907). The Dravidian school of Tamil studies on the other hand was keen to show its loyalty to the Raj and represented Vellala caste interests.

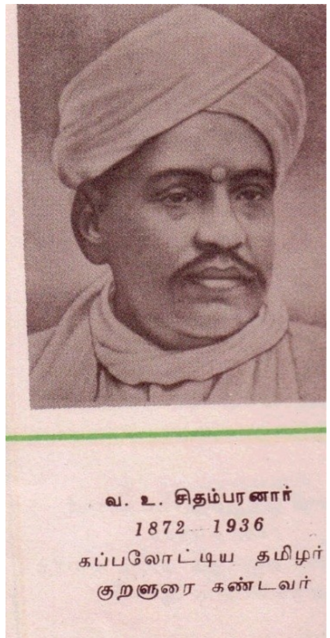
It was in this context that M.Raghava Aiyangar's Tamil nationalist project took shape. He conceived of a martial heritage that was unique to the Tamil country constituted by the Chera, Chola and Pandya kingdoms in South India, and was - according to him - far superior to the military powers of north Indian peoples. He, an erudite Tamil scholar, skillfully melded his politics into a compelling representation of a heroic Tamil past.

The politicisation of Aiyangar's reading of the Tamil past begins with the event that kindled the revolutionary movement in 1905 – the victory of Japan over Russia. Japan's example was proof that India's traditional material values could prevail over British arms. The victory was hailed by those who subscribed to the ideas of Thilak's militarism. Aiyangar wrote *Parani* poems (a form of Tamil heroic poetry to celebrate the victory of a warrior who slays 1,000 elephants in the battle) exalting Japan's military might in the Sangam's journal '*Senthamil*'. In 1907, when the activities of the revolutionary movement and the Swadeshi movement were gathering momentum, he wrote an editorial essay on 'Warrior Mothers' (*Veerath Thaimar*). The ideological agenda for what has been described as the 'Mother politics' of militant Tamil nationalism was set forth in this essay. He wrote,

"Although there may be other reasons for the victory of the Japanese over the Russians, more numerous and belonging to a larger country, the main reason is the martial training given [to] them by their parents from childhood…the valour and patriotisms of Japanese mothers can be seen in the volumes called 'The Russo-Japanese War'. These things may appear strange in our times but if we examine our history we will find such warrior mothers and their valorous children numerous…In ancient Tamil texts like *Purananooru*, the martial theme predominates. It should be noted how the mothers of that era created great warriors."

The essay is based on heroic poetry of the *Moothinmullai* category found in the *Purananooru* and the *Purath-thirattu.Moothinmullai* is a category in the poetics of codified Tamil martial culture in which the culmination [of] a woman's motherhood is portrayed as the heroic martyrdom of her warrior son in battle. The mothers urge their sons to die valiantly in war. Aiyangar contrasts a *Moothinmullai* poem in which the warrior's mother says her womb is the lair of the Tiger, who could be found only in battle fields, with another poem of the category in which a mother whose son has failed to attain martyrdom in battle, exclaims in anguish that she would cut under her womb that give birth to a coward.

V. O. Chidamparam Pillai



Aiyangar notes that the earliest Tamil grammar - the Tholkappiyam - defines and names the poetic theme of the mother who comits suicide on hearing her son's lack of valour in the battle field. ('These mothers belonged to Maravar clans', he says. The Maravar are matrilineal.) He says that the warriors brought forth by these mothers made Tamil Nadu glorious in the Sangam era, in which "one does not hear of north Indian kings invading Tamil Nadu, but only the victories of Tamil kings who fought the northerners. This was so because of the greatness of Tamil martial might." He concludes that the decline of the Tamils was the results of the decline of what he calls *Thamil Veeram* (Tamil martial prowess).

Subramanya Bharathi saw immense political value in the essay for propagating the ideas of the revolutionary movement's militarism among the Tamils. He serialized the essay in his paper *'India'*, and urged his readers to popularise it among their friends, relatives and 'women at their homes'. The essay was used by Bharathy as an instrument for rekindling the martial ethos among the Tamils to achieve national liberation through armed insurrection. Bharathy and V.O.Chidamparam Pillai wrote to Aiyangar, saluting the nationalist spirit inspired [by] his essays.

The politics of the Thamil Sangam was muted next year, when the Swadesh Steam Navigation company was crushed following riots against the British at Tuticorin and Tinnevely. V.O.Chidamparam Pillai and the revolutionary leader Subramaniya Siva were arrested and imprisoned. The publisher of Bharathy's paper '*India*' was also arrested on sedition charges. Bharathy became an exile in the French cology of Pondicherry.

Nevertheless, Aiyangar developed the theme of a Tamil martial tradition that was superior to the north, into one of the most persistent and characterising narratives of militant Tamil nationalism - the Seran Senguttuvan legend of the epic *Silapathigaram*. His belief that the decline of the Tamil martial tradition caused the decline of the Tamil nation has been echoed in every Tamil nationalist project since his time. Raghava Aiyangar lamented the decline of martial values in Tamil society, for he saw himself essentially as a loyal Brahmin of one of the oldest ruling Maravar clans of Tamil Nadu. His Tamil nationalist project was rooted in that self-perception.

Notes

(1) Recent gender-oriented critique of the LTTE fails to take note of the fact that the *Moothinmullai* Mother is a leitmotif in the structuring and representation of the Tamil nationalist project. Hence in the BBC documentary on the Tigers -*Suicide Killers* -

the Black Tiger Miller's mother is presented to the TV crew as a woman who feels proud of her son's heroic martyrdom in the suicide attack on the Nelliady, Sri Lankan army camp in 1987. The LTTE here is reproducing a fundamental structure of representing Tamilian identity. C.S.Lakshmi has examined the role of the concept of the heroic mother in the militant Dravidian movement and its strategy of mobilising women. She, however, fails to take note of the politics of Aiyangar and Bharathy and the impact of the Russo-Japanese war on them in the genesis of this concept. C.S.Lakshmi; Mother, Mother-community and Mother-politics in Tamil Nadu. *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 1990.

(2) [For] the role of the Sethupathys and Marava chieftains in the promotion of Tamil literature, see *Sangath Thamilum Pitkalath Thamilum*, U.V.Saminatha Aiyer, 1949, Kabir Press, Madras.

(3) *Senthamil Valartha Thevarhal*, M.Raghava Aiyangar; 1948, D.G.Gopalapillai Co., Tiruchi.

(4) Aiyangar was held in great esteem by the Tamil elite of Colombo and Jaffna. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan invited him to lecture in Jaffna. One V.J.Thambi Pillai translated his '*Velir Varalaru'* and published it in *the Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon*. K.Srikanthan gave an award to his work '*Tholkappiya Araichi'*. One of the earliest modern historians of Jaffna, A.Mootoothambi Pillai, who was a contributor to the Sangam's journal *Senthamil* reflected Aiyangar's thesis in his Jaffna history, when he lamented the decline of Jaffna's martial values which according to him had flourished under the ruler Sankili. Mootoothambi Pillai, 1912, *'History of Jaffna'*.

(5) 'Siranjeevi'; 1981. '*Sethupathikal Varalaaru'* (History of Sethupathys), Jeevan Press, Madras.

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